

AN
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
Nature, Necessity, and Evidence
OF
Christian Faith,
In Several
ESSAYS.

PART I.
Of Faith in General, and of the Belief of a Deity.

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The Contents of the First Part

Introduction, containing the Author's Preface, and the Dedication to the Honorable the Lord Chancellor, and the Right Honorable the Judges of the High Court of Chancery.

Part I. containing the History of the Office of the Lord Chancellor, and the Office of the Judges of the High Court of Chancery, from the first Institution thereof, to the present Time.

Part II. containing the History of the Office of the Lord Chancellor, and the Office of the Judges of the High Court of Chancery, from the first Institution thereof, to the present Time.

Part III. containing the History of the Office of the Lord Chancellor, and the Office of the Judges of the High Court of Chancery, from the first Institution thereof, to the present Time.

Part IV. containing the History of the Office of the Lord Chancellor, and the Office of the Judges of the High Court of Chancery, from the first Institution thereof, to the present Time.

Part V. containing the History of the Office of the Lord Chancellor, and the Office of the Judges of the High Court of Chancery, from the first Institution thereof, to the present Time.

Part VI. containing the History of the Office of the Lord Chancellor, and the Office of the Judges of the High Court of Chancery, from the first Institution thereof, to the present Time.

Part VII. containing the History of the Office of the Lord Chancellor, and the Office of the Judges of the High Court of Chancery, from the first Institution thereof, to the present Time.

Part VIII. containing the History of the Office of the Lord Chancellor, and the Office of the Judges of the High Court of Chancery, from the first Institution thereof, to the present Time.

The CONTENTS of this First Part.

Introduction, shewing the Oc-
casion and Design of the fol-
lowing Essays, p. 1.

Essay I. Faith is and hath been
the Perpetual Standard of
Righteousness from the Be-
ginning of the World p. 6.

1. Faith proper to Scripture
and required under the Dis-
pensation of both Testaments,
ibid.

2. What to live by Faith, p. 7.

3. All the righteous upwards
to Adam lived by Faith, p. 8.

4. It is great Insolence to find
Fault with the Terms and
Phrases by which the Prin-
ciples of Scripture are set
forth, p. 9.

Essay II. Of Faith as opposed to
Doubting, p. 11.

1. The Meaning of Faith
ought to be enquired after,
ibid.

2. Common Definitions and
Distinctions of Faith not con-
sidered nor any new Defini-
tion offered, p. 12.

3. Faith first opposed to Doubt-
ing, implies a firm Perswa-
sion of Good and Evil, which
is essential to a just Man,
p. 13.

4. Of the Influence which this
Faith has upon Actions, as to
the rendering them Good or
Evil, p. 14.

5. This Faith no light Perswa-
sion but the Effect of serious
Enquiry and Deliberation, ib.

6. It is the first Principle of
a good Life, p. 17.

Essay III. Of Faith as opposed
to Atheism, and how a Be-
lief of the Existence of God
is necessary to determine the
certain Rule of Moral Acti-
ons, p. 18.

1. Faith is a Belief of God
and his Attributes, ibid.

2. The Necessity of this Belief
for knowing the first and great
Rule of Moral Actions, ibid.

3. Righteousness according to
Scripture, is to act with a
continual regard to God, p. 19.

4. Those Divines are very cen-
surable, who recommend Mo-
rality upon other Principles
more and oftner than this,
p. 20.

Essay IV. The Existence of
God is most evident, p. 22.

1. The Belief of a Deity is
the first Principle of Morali-
ty, and the true Foundation of
all Religion and Righteous-
ness, ibid.

2. It doth not require Learning
or great Travel to know that
there is a God p. 23.

3. Some Truths more obvious
than Mathematical Demon-
strations; and it may be said,
That the Existence of a
Deity is more Evident than
the Propositions of Euclid,
p. 24.

4. Whether there be real
Atheists. The Causes of
Atheism considered, ibid.
First Cause of Atheism, Vi-
tiousness, p. 25. A Second
Cause of Atheism, the being
rebutted

Genes 13 May 42 Norman

The CONTENTS of this First Part.

- rebutted by Difficulties, p. 25.*
A Third Cause of Atheism,
want of Consideration, p. 27.
Essay V. Evidences of a Deity
in Man, p. 28.
 1. *The outward Figure of*
Man's Body considered, ibid.
 2. *The Inward Frame, p. 29.*
 3. *Life and Sense, with the*
Organs of them, ibid.
 4. *The Internal, and Intelle-*
tual Faculties, p. 33.
 5. *The Method of nourishing*
the Body, p. 34.
 6. *The Manner of its Gene-*
ration. p. 35.
 7. *Of the useful Dependence*
of some outward Members
upon our Will, and how rea-
dily they answer our thoughts,
p. 37.
Essay VI. Evidences of a Deity
in other Parts of the World,
p. 38.
 1. *All other things, as well as*
Man, prove that there is a
God. It is evident, That
Man and all other things
had one Author or Cause,
ibid.
 2. *Contrivance and Design in*
every thing, in the Cele-
stial Orbs, p. 39.
 3. *In Vegetables and Ani-*
mals, p. 41.
 4. *Locusts and Caterpillars*
considered, p. 43.
 5. *The Disorders and Irregu-*
larities occasioned by Man
no reproach to the Wisdom
of God, ibid.
 6. *It is unreasonable to ask*
more Evidence for the Exi-
stence of God, than what we
have, p. 46.
 7. *God's Eternity obvious.*
His Omnipotency appears in
the Immensity of the World.
ibid.
 8. *His Wisdom and Power in*
the very Disposal of meer
Matter, or the several kinds
of Earth, p. 48.
 9. *In the Variety and Virtue*
of Plants, p. 49.
 10. *In the Diversity of Ani-*
mals, p. 53.
 11. *It is impossible to convince*
them who resist these Evi-
dences, p. 55.
Essay VII. Of the Absurdity
of Atheism, p. 56.
 1. *Two sorts of Demonstra-*
tion. A Deity demonstrable
by both of them, ibid.
 2. *The Existence of God pro-*
ved by the First, ibid.
 3. *The Objections of Atheists*
do strengthen the Belief of a
God. The First Objection
stated, p. 58.
 4. *The Answer to it p. 59.*
 5. *A Second Objection, p. 63.*
 6. *The Answer, p. 64.*
 7. *A Third Objection, p. 68.*
 8. *The Answer, ibid.*
 9. *A Fourth Objection, with*
the Answer, p. 71.
 10. *A Deity proved by the*
other kind of Demonstration,
ex absurdo, ibid.
The Conclusion, p. 76.

A N
ENQUIRY
 INTO THE
 Nature, Necessity, and Evidence
 OF
Christian Faith.

INTRODUCTION.

*Shewing the Occasion and Design of the
 following Essays.*

AS certainly the Christian Religion has the fairest appearance of any, and comes to us with all the marks of Truth, being stamp'd with Characters truly Divine, and carrying along with it Authentick Testimonies, both from Heaven and Earth; so they who had the keeping of it, have, for near these 1700 Years, taught that *Faith* was a very considerable part of it, and absolutely Necessary to the obtaining all those Advantages which are promised by it.

But now there is a Set of Men who pretend new Discoveries: They decry *Faith* as much as it was formerly

merly magnified, and turn the things proposed to be believed into ridicule. Some of them run down *Faith* by exposing the Clergy, who require it, as ignorant and Foolish, a sort of Men who are easily imposed upon, or who, to keep up their *Trade*, study to impose on others, amusing them with *mysterious Nonsense*. Others essay to prove, That *Faith* is impossible where Reason rules and is used; and therefore that Believing proceeds from a Defect of Reason, and consequently unworthy of those who own themselves to be Men, that is, reasonable Creatures. A Third sort examine the several Points of *Faith*, as they are set forth in *Systems* and *Confessions*, and do either dwindle them away into nothing, or render them very absurd, that is impossible or no ways worthy to be believed. This Controversie is of the highest Importance: all ought to be inquisitive into it, and earnest to know on what side *Truth* lies, not to satisfy an idle Curiosity, but to discover the certain and solid foundation, if there be any such thing, on which they may build their Peace and Comfort, with respect to the *present life*, and joyful hopes in reference to *that* which may be *hereafter*.

Upon this account I resolved on this *Enquiry*, and to proceed in it with all the care that becomes a Lover of Truth, in matters of so very great moment, who ought not to suffer himself to be byass'd by his former Sentiments, nor to be carried off by the Censures of the World, nor to be possessed with a fondness for Opinions, meerly because they are *New* or *Old*, Singular or Common.

My first aim was to satisfy my self; and now I propose the giving true information to others, and for that end shall lay all things candidly before them, imposing as little on them, as on my self, who am not willing to be deceived. And I am confident that he, who is attentive and willing to be informed, shall receive plain and full *Conviction*.

To try this Matter, I do not find it proper to appeal to the Universal Doctrine, either of the Present, or Primitive

mitive Church. The Fathers may be thought as partial and incompetent Judges as the Modern Divines. Authorities have no weight with the Patrons of Incredulity, they laugh at this Method, and judge it as unreasonable, as if one would consult old Bigotted Aristotelians about the *New Philosophy*. I know their regard to the Scripture, is much the same as what they have to other Books: They read and examine it with the same boldness and freedom, and very often with less Modesty than human Writings. Because its Assertions are plain, and otherwise unanswerable; therefore, to shelter themselves, and to defend their Opinions, they disown its Authority, and cry it down as a Book which is not implicitly to be believed more than others. Hence it is that some attack the *Authenticness* and *Purity* of the *Text*; others, the *Integrity* and *Inspiration* of the *Pen-men*: and all of them endeavour, one way or other, to remove the only sure Light we have to direct our Course. So they would reason us into a fearful and troublesom uncertainty; and they make our condition as deplorable as Persons at Sea in a dark tempestuous Night, without Waggoner, Compass, or Pilot.

I intend not to prove the *Divine Authority* of the *Scripture*, which hath been admirably well done by several, both in this, and former Ages: I take this for granted. But if this be too great a *Postulatum*, it will be sufficient for my business to suppose it in the first rank of Books, which it may claim, both by reason of its Antiquity, and the things contained in it. The Authors of this Holy Book merit Reverence and Esteem, at least as much as *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Seneca*, *Epictetus*, *Confucius* of *China*, and other Ancients, whose Sentiments the World is curious to know, and which Learned Men have been employed to Collect, as useful to Mankind. Nay, I am willing at present even to pass this too. I ask only (which cannot be justly denied) a due Attention to what is said in Scripture, and an impartial and unbiass'd consideration of the excellency and reasonableness of what it proposes;

for then, I am sure, that the *Doctrine of Christianity* will appear divine, and true, and *worthy of all acceptance*: for it shines with Evidence, as the Light which Proves and manifests *it self* to every one that is not blind. If our Gospel (saith St. Paul) be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, &c. The finest Picture doth not look well, if it be nor set in a proper Light. Nor doth the Gospel appear reasonable, when it is not duly represented. All the Cavils and Objections, that are made against it, proceed from a wrong view of it; represent it fairly, and there is nothing more agreeable: Its Imperfections are Beauties and admirable Contrivances: its Foolishness is the highest Wisdom: its seeming Absurdities and Contradictions, upon Examination, are most rational and perfectly consistent: its Faith is Conviction and Demonstration. In a word, it is every way *faithful* and *true*, and *worthy to be received* by the wisest and most perfect Men, as I hope to make appear by these Essays, and what are to follow hereafter, which I desire may be read with Attention and Candour, and according to the Method in which it is written. For Divine Truths are in this like the Propositions of *Euclid*: There is a dependency amongst them, the first must be received before the rest can be admitted. But tho' what is Prior in order of Nature ought to be first considered, yet it is certain, that the same is not so fully comprehended, as when what follows is known and understood. Thus the Existence of a Deity is to be proved before a Providence, and yet the Proofs of a Providence, and such a view of it, as we may have by Reason and Revelation, doth not only mightily confirm us in the Belief of a God, but also very much enlarge our Idea of him: That which may be known by Nature and Reason, should be proposed before the Discoveries of Revelation; and yet the Light of Revelation doth give clearer Convictions of the former, and doth render intelligible, what before could not indeed be denied; but yet was not well understood. Nature and Reason may be compared to the dawnings
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of the Morning, which is not to be despised : but the Discoveries of the Scripture, resemble the Light of the Sun when it is mounted the Horizon, which is full and sufficient for all that is necessary to our present state.

We should have begun at that *Faith* which is peculiar to the Gospel, and so spared our labour in proving a Deity and Providence, if the present growth of Atheism had not made it necessary to establish these first. It is true, these Subjects have of late been excellently well handled, to which we might have referred; but that would have been to build upon another Man's foundation. All must acknowledge, that these Subjects are of great importance, and therefore what we offer about them, ought to be kindly received both by those who doubt, and those who believe; that the one may be confirmed, and the other satisfied, in Matters that so nearly concern them. I would not be thought to despise some Proofs and Arguments which I have not used: Our Essays would have run out into vast Volumes, if we had amassed all that might have been said, and therefore we have only made choice of such things as either have least been considered by others, or which may be of most common use. We do not write for the Instruction of those who have been bred in Universities, and therefore have purposely waved what could not be understood without Metaphysical Notions, and the abstruse part of Learning.

We have digested our Enquires about Faith into *three Parts*, of which the present Essays make the *First*: And we have been advised to Publish them separately, to encourage the Reading of them: For tho' those who have most need of Information, have also generally most leisure to Read; yet it is well known that they are also least willing to undertake the Reading of what requires many Hours and much Attention. Bulky Books fright them, and they throw them by, as too great Interruptions to their Diversions; for the most of their Occupations are nothing else. But if such will not be at the

6 *Faith the perpetual Standard of Righteousness.*

pains to read a few Sheets, they bewray their Aversion to these Truths, and do in vain pretend to excuse their Infidelity, by want of true Conviction.

The *Second Part* is wholly taken up about Providence, which is too copious a Subject to be exhausted by any; but without the hazard of being vain or immodest, I may say, that there is at least some things suggested, which may both perswade the belief of a Providence, and also satisfy mens Minds in some measure about the Strange and Wonderful Dispensations of it, which, not being commonly handled, we have the more largely insisted on. In the *Third and last Part*, shall be considered that *Faith* which is founded upon *Revelation*; which also we shall endeavour to set in its true Light. Both these *Parts* shall follow very soon, if it please God to assist us; and I heartily wish, that all of them may prove Useful to the design proposed, by helping to clear those Truths which are of the greatest Importance.

ESSAY I.

Faith is, and hath been, the Perpetual Standard of Righteousness from the beginning of the World.

I. **A**S all *Authors* (whether *Historians* or *Philosophers*) have their *peculiar Phrases* and *way of Speaking*, so *Faith* is a *word* and *term* proper to *Sacred Scripture*. It never occurs to us in the reading of any of the *Heathen Moralists*, in *that sense* in which we meet with it almost in every leaf of the *Holy Bible*. *St. Paul* as agreeable to the other *Apostles*, he discourses often, and very much of *Faith*; so, in three several *Epistles*, he asserts, that the *Just shall live by Faith*: and in one of them, he Prefaces it with an *as it is written*, testifying by this, that it was no *New Doctrine* of the *Gospel* but that which

Faith the perpetual Standard of Righteousness. 7

which was taught by the *Law* and the *Prophets*. And accordingly we find the same very words in the Prophet *Habakkuk*, Chap. 2. 4. whence we may conclude, that this is a *Scripture Maxim*, of certain and perpetual Verity, under every Dispensation, as well the former as the present.

II. By the *Just*, is to be understood the Good, Holy, and Righteous; in opposition to the Wicked and Ungodly. And to *live*, comprehends and must be extended to, the whole tract and course of their Life and Conversation; for to restrain it to *any single*, or *individual act*, which hath not an Universal influence upon the whole Man and all its Motions, is to make the Scripture and Inspirer of it speak very improperly. He is not said to live in a place, who lodgeth there a Night or two; but who has his constant Residence and Abode in it. Nor can he be said properly to live by any Art or Science, who now and then perhaps diverteth himself with it; but only he who makes it his profession, aim, and study, who constantly exerciseth it, and subsisteth by it. So when it is said that the *Just live by Faith*, the meaning is, and must be, that they always *walk by Faith*; they order and frame their whole Life and Conversation according to it. It is the Principle by which they are actuated, and which produceth all that they do. As the Soul and Spirit give Life to the Body, excite, direct, and determine the Actions of the whole Man, so Faith is the Soul, Life and Spirit of a Just or Righteous Man, the first and great Principle of his Motions, the chief Rule and Director of his Actions, that which quickens his Hopes, awakens his Fears, excites and curbs his Passion, and which pusheth him forward to all that is suitable to his Rank, Quality, and other Circumstances in which he stands. In a word, to *live by Faith*, must be to think, speak, and act by it, for Life comprehends all this. And he who doth thus *live by Faith*, is truly Just, Good, Holy, and Righteous. For if it be true that the *Just do live by Faith*, it is also true that *they who live by*

8 *Faith the perpetual Standard of Righteousness.*

Faith are *Just*. As Knowledge and Wisdom render a Man learned and wise, so *Faith* makes one *Just* and *Righteous*: and this Righteousness encreaseth according to the proportion of our *Faith*; for there are degrees of *Faith* as of *Life*; there are weaker and stronger, imperfect and perfect in both.

III. Now that it is not peculiar to the state of the Gospel for the *Just to live by Faith*, but that they did so, under the Law, and before it, doth farther appear from what the Apostle writes in the *Eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, where, by a long enumeration of particular instances, he proves that all the Righteous, even up to *Abel*, that is, ever since the Fall, did walk by *Faith*; and that *Faith* was the source and spring of both their Common, and Extraordinary Actions. And he might have ascended higher, and shewed, that even in the state of Innocence, *Faith* was appointed the Life and Soul of Righteousness: for that Command which was given to our first Parents, about the *Tree of Knowledge*, in the midst of the *Garden*, was to exercise their *Faith*, as their Transgression was a failure of *Faith* as well as of Obedience. St. Paul, in the *Epistle to the Galatians*, and in the first Part of that to the *Romans*, pursues the same Truth against the Bigotted Jews and Judaizing Christians. For to convince them of their Error, in expecting to be *Justified* by the *Law of Moses*, He shews clearly, that, before the *Law* was in being, Men were accounted *Just* and *Righteous* before God, by reason of their *Faith*, and therefore that *Faith* was the permanent and perpetual Standard or Rule both for measuring Mens Righteousness, and for obtaining their *Justification*. Because *Abraham* was an eminent Example of *Faith*, therefore he was not only reputed *Righteous*. but had the peculiar honour to be called the *Friend of God*, and the *Father of the Faithful*, in all succeeding Generations. And all who believe, and live by *Faith*, are stiled the *Children of Abraham*, and *Heirs* of his Honour and Privileges. Upon which account they are also named the *Children of God*,
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Faith the perpetual Standard of Righteousness. 9

the *holy Seed*, the *righteous Generation*, in opposition to the *Sons of Belial*, the *Wicked* and *Reprobate*, who are branded with the Character of *Unbelievers*, *Children of Unbelief*, *Persons without Faith*, as the *Original* bears, which is *ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπιστίας*.

Much more might be said on this Head, but it sufficiently appears from what hath been said, that according to the peculiar Dialect, both of the *Old* and *New Testament*, *Faith* and *Holiness*, *Believing* and *to be Just*, or *to live righteously*, are used indifferently, as *reciprocal Phrases*, which import or inerr one another. And the reason of this Dialect is, because, according to the Philosophy of the Scripture, that which goes under the Name of *Faith*, is the first Principle which actuates a good or just Man, and that the Goodness or Righteousness, which is acceptable to God, is only the Effects or Expressions of that *Faith*, which naturally and inseparably follow it as the Light doth the Sun.

Now, before I proceed further, it is in no wise improper, yea, it is convenient, to represent here the Obligation which lieth upon all, who own the Authority of Scripture, to entertain those *Phrases* and *Expressions*, with respect and reverence.

IV. *They* ought to esteem them not only Sacred, but Exact and Just, and the fittest to convey true Notions into our Minds. A Wise Man can express his own Thoughts best. And sure none can be supposed more qualified to know the most apposite words for expressing Truth, than the Spirit of Truth, or they who are inspired by it. *They*, who recede from the *Phrases* of any Author, do also generally differ from his Sentiments, and give others occasion to mistake them. For the peculiar and repeated Phrases, which one has used constantly, do give the greatest Light to the Discovery of his Thoughts: For if he had not perceived or fancied some Propriety in those *Phrases*, for representing what he would be at, he would not have been so fond of them, nor would he so constantly have used them, even
as

10 *Faith the perpetual Standard of Righteousness.*

as an exact and Skilful Painter, observeth carefully, both the Strokes and Mixtures, which are fittest to shadow out the Colours and Figures he would represent. But even abstracting from the Divine Authority of Scripture, and the peculiar Inspiration of the Pen-men, it is very great Immodesty to offer to correct and amend their Expressions; as if any now a-days could express their Thoughts, Notions and Sentiments better, than they themselves were capable to do, especially on Subjects with which they were well acquainted, and which they knew better than other Men, by reason of their Profound Meditation, the Purity of their Minds, and the integrity of their Lives. These very things (if divine and immediate Inspiration will not be allowed them) could qualify them to teach the Nature and Acts of a Holy Life, or true Righteousness far better than others. All the Heathen Philosophers came short of their Perfection, and therefore are not so good Masters of Morality: for *Moral Truths* are not like *Mathematical ones*, to be learned by Reading and Study: The Knowledge of those comes best, nay, can only be had by serious and continued Practice. A good Man Unlearned, has a deeper sense of Christian Morality, and can discourse more lively and reasonably of it, than the greatest Scholar, who has only the Theory. And there be some expressions which seem mean and silly to the last, which the other feels to be just and Emphatick; as what that Man esteems lofty and Sublime, this Man Undervalues; for the one knows and thoroughly understands the Subject he speaks of, which the other does not. To return all the Disciples of any Sect; reverence the Authors and Founders of them, and love to speak in their Language, and according to their Dialect. An Aristotelian will huff, and grow very angry if the *Cant* of his Schools be mocked; and the well-bred Cartesian will not be much more calm and easie, when the Terms and Principles of his Philosophy are played upon. Now ought not Christians to be much more tender of
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Of Faith as opposed to Doubting.

11

the Divine Phrases by which the Prophets and Apostles have used to set forth the Secret and Sublime Principles of that Life, which renders us acceptable to God, and makes us to be reputed Righteous in his sight? Which Phrases were neither blindly hit upon, nor affected to amuse, but wisely chosen as most proper; because both clear and comprehensive. Therefore to mock *Faith*, and to turn *Believing* into Ridicule, to explode the Phrase, and pretend to give better, is insufferable Insolence, and a high Affront to the Apostles, and Prophets, and that Spirit which did inspire them. Christians ought to resent this: to bear with it is not Meekness; but want of Zeal and Courage; it is a lazy treachery, as when one beholds the Rights of his Country or Society invaded and betrayed, and yet holds his Peace. It does not become the Children of the Family to assume the Liberty, or rather licentiousness of Enemies and Aliens, and if the Wantonness of their Humour prompt them to it, it is their Duty who have the Charge of the Family, to Chastise them into better Manners.

ESSAY II.

Of Faith as opposed to Doubting.

I. **W**Hatever regard be due to *Words* and *Phrases*, there is a greater due to the sense and meaning of them. Men are no better than *Parrots*, if they utter Words, and do not understand them. Without penetrating into the sense of *Words*, we can never come to the knowledge of those *Truths* which are wrapt up in them; and we are more or less concerned to do this, according as These are of importance. Wherefore we are strictly obliged to enquire into the Nature of *Faith* seeing it is so much magnified in Scripture, seeing it is said, That *the Just do live by it*; and, That it is now at
this

this time, as it has always been, the Principle of a holy and spiritual Life.

II. As this Enquiry is both useful and necessary, so I will give my small assistance to such as are pleas'd to make it: But in order to this, I resolve not either to consider the *Definitions* of others, or to give a *New one* of my own. The *common Definitions* of *Faith* would hamper me too much: If I were tied to them, I could not have the freedom of my design, which is, to make a clear, full, and ample Description of *Faith*. This is not to cast a slight upon any of the received *Definitions*; which, as they are placed in the *common Catechisms*, do serve well enough to point out some of the special and chief Acts of *Faith*, but which yet are not sufficient to give a full or clear *Idea* of it. Nor will I attempt to amend them, or to establish a better one; for it is not easie to make a good *Definition* of such a very comprehensive thing as *Faith* is: nor is such a thing well understood by any *Definition*, as by taking a particular and separate view of those things which it comprehends. It is but a very confused Notion of *Grammar*, *Logick*, or any other *Science* which Youth have by the *Definitions* which are first taught them; they then only rightly understand the Nature and Use of these *Sciences*, when they have gone through them.

And as I am not to trouble my self with the *common Definitions*, so neither will I intangle my self, or the Reader, with the *ordinary Distinctions* of *Faith*; such as *Temporary Faith*, an *Historical Faith*, a *Faith of Miracles*, &c. For tho' there be something in Scripture which gives occasion to these Names and Distinctions, yet the consideration of them would give little light to our Enquiry, for they suppose the Knowledge of *Faith* which we enquire after, and are designed to mark out some certain degrees of *Faith*, rather than to instruct the Nature of it, which we mainly aim at. For my purpose is, by the light and guidance of Scripture alone, to search out this *Faith*, which is so necessary to entitle one to be Just and

and Righteous before God, and upon which account it must be that St. Paul saith, *without Faith it is impossible to please him*, Heb. xi. 6. And to prevent all dangerous Error, that we may not mistake one sort of Faith for another, a Faith which cannot, or doth not render Just, for one that doth, we shall have still in our Eye this necessary Relation betwixt *Faith* and *Righteousness*.

III. To proceed then, In the first place, I find *Faith* taken in opposition to *Doubting*: so it is taken, *Rom. xiv. 22.* and in several other places. And in this sence *Faith* is much the same with Conscience, and is an *inward Conviction or Perswasion of Mind* concerning what is true or false, good and evil, lawful and unlawful. Which Perswasion or inward conviction, is the first Rule or Standard by which one's Integrity and Uprightness is to be measured; and therefore it is as necessary for the Just to live by this Faith, as for a Square to have four equal sides: both Texts of Scripture, and the Nature of the thing require it. The true and primitive Character of a Just man is to be Conscientious, to follow the Dictates of his Mind, and to order his Life and Actions according to what he knows and believes to be right. A Just Man must be Upright, and there is no Uprightness if the outward and inward-man are not conform to one another, if there be no Correspondence betwixt them, if the Mouth contradict the Heart, and the Life and Actions be disagreeable to the inward Light and Sentiments.

This Faith is as the Eye by which we see and know how to order our Steps; it is as the Light to shew the Way in which we should walk, and not to follow it, or to go contrary to it, is great Perverseness, and the Character of a Wicked Man. As the Spirit is the Principle of Life, and Life of Motion; so this Faith is the first Principle of a good Life, and Men are to be reckoned good or bad as they walk according to it: He is a bad Man who contradicts it, and he is no good Man whose Actions do not flow from it. The Motions of a Puppet or Engine may be both Regular and Useful, but they cannot be reckoned
Natural

Natural ; because they proceed not from a Principle of Life but from Artificial Springs. So tho' one's Actions be never so plausible, fair or useful to others, yet they are not good ; nor is he, who doth them, Just, if they proceed from any other principle than this Faith, that is, an inward Perswasion of their being just and good, lawful and reasonable, *for whatsoever is not of Faith* (saith the Apostle) *is sin*, Rom.xiv. 23. Hence it is that we see some in Scripture branded with the Character of ill Men, and others denied the Approbation of being good, whose Actions were outwardly good and commendable, because they did what they did, for other Reasons, and upon another account, than the intrinsic goodness of those things, or their own Perswasion of it.

IV. All the Actions of every one are to be Approved or Condemned, with a regard to this Faith, and by virtue of it, things, in themselves good and lawful, become evil, and what is evil loseth a part of its malignity. Thus the *Eating of Flesh*, which in it self is a lawful and innocent Action, is a damnable Sin to him who has the least doubt whether it be lawful ; and what is clean turns unclean to him who thinks it so, as is excellently discoursed in that fore-cited Chapter. So on the other hand, we find God himself excusing *Abimelech* for taking *Sarah* into his House, because *he did it in the integrity of his heart* ; that is, he was ignorant of her being another Man's Wife. And *St. Paul's* Persecution of the Saints was the more pardonable, because he verily thought he ought to do many things against the Name of Jesus : *I was before* (saith he) *a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief* ; that is, without Faith, or the perswasion of the evil of it, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13.

V. But then it is to be remembred, That this Faith which hath such influence upon our Actions, and which is so Essential to a Just Man, is not Fancy or Imagination, nor a light or hasty Perswasion. *Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind*, saith the Apostle, ver. 5. and therefore

therefore our Faith and Perswasion ought to be well-grounded, the effect of serious Enquiry and Deliberation, that it may give true and certain Direction, otherwise it may be still said that we are regardless of Right and Wrong, Truth or Falshood, Good and Evil, which is inconsistent with the Character of a perfectly Just Man. A wise Architect doth not work at random, but by Plumb and Rule; but then he is first careful that his Plumb and Rule be right and exact; for without this, he cannot sincerely intend to have his work perfect. So a Just man carefully studieth both a Conformity betwixt his Actions and his inward Sentiments, and betwixt these and truth, and the stable Rule of Right and wrong, Good and Evil. To act contrary to inward Conviction is to offend wilfully, and the height of Wickedness; but it is the next degree to it to be careless whether we offend or not, whether we do Good or Evil, which we are guilty of, when we are not at any pains to adjust our Perswasion to Truth, to know the right, or to inform our selves of what is good, lawful, and fit to be done. The same reason which makes it Just, and our Duty to act according to our Knowledge, and inward Perswasion, or to do the Good we know, obligeth us to search out the real Good that is, that there may be no Errour in our Perswasion, nor Crookedness in our Practice; and then only our Thoughts can justifie our Actions, when, by Diligence and due Care, we have endeavoured to make our Thoughts just and true, conform to the Nature of things; for without this, we cannot be *fully perswaded in our Minds*, as the Apostle enjoineth; the assurance of Faith is wanting, which is necessary to dispell all doubts, and to establish our goings. *Happy is he* (saith St. Paul) *that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth*, Rom. xiv. 22. by which he gives us to understand, that our Heart must approve our Actions; our Minds must Judge, that the ways we take are right, otherwise we stand Self-condemned. Now the Judgment is not Just which is not certain, which is rashly or
hastily

hastily pronounced, before a strict Examination, or a due Attention to all the Proofs and Evidences which can be brought for clearing the Cause. There is still place for Doubting, when necessary Caution and the proper Means have not been used for right and sufficient Information. And as Doubting defileth the Man, and polluteth all his Actions, so it is uneasie to the Mind: As Darkness, in which when one walketh; It maketh him Apprehensive, full of Fears and Jealousies, going forwards and backwards, to the right and left, without any steady course; because he has no certainty of his way. What is translated a *Double-minded Man*, ought to be a *Doubtful Man*, one that has not the assurance of Faith; and such an one (saith St. James) is *unstable in all his ways, he wavereth like a wave of the Sea, which is driven with the wind and tossed*, Jam. i. 6, 8. Fleeting and Inconstancy, change of Opinions and Practices, regarding Events and outward Advantages, is at least a sure Sign and Evidence that the Person has not attained to a true Faith, or full Perswasion of his Duty, of what is good, lawful, or necessary; for Faith gives a chearful confidence, it makes one constant, and to be always the same; because Truth and the Nature of things change not.

To conclude this Matter; By *Faith* here we are to understand a true Knowledge of the Nature of things, a clear Conviction of Truth, and a hearty full Perswasion of Good and Evil, Lawful and Unlawful, which every one should endeavour after as much as possible: And also every one ought to live answerably to the measure which he hath attained of it. Who doth thus, so far he is to be reckoned Good and Just; for he hath no Perverseness in his temper, no crooked Byass in his Constitution, but sheweth an Integrity of Mind without guile or hypocrisie, and a regular Will, which offers no Prejudice, but which renders to every person and thing what is due.

VI. Righteousness begins here: A tendency towards this Faith is the first Symptom and Appearance, as well as Motion, of a Just and Good Life, which like the Natural, upon its first Production, may be weak and languid; but which, like it too, groweth if it be not stifled: and as it groweth, so it acquireth strength and vigour, until it arrive at Perfection. The first moments of the Morning are hardly distinguished from black Night; but it creepeth on insensibly, until the whole Hemisphere be enlightened. So *the Paths of the just (saith Solomon) are as the shining light, which shineth more and more until the perfect day*, Prov. iv. 18.

Thus both the Nature and Necessity of Faith as opposed to Doubting, is Evident. It is the Dictate of Reason as well as Religion, That every one ought to consider his Ways; That all ought to follow that which seems Just and Right; and consequently, that all should study to find out that which is Just and Right, and proper to be followed. For otherwise Men do not act like Men, that is, as Creatures who are made capable to know what they do, and why: without This, it cannot appear that they either Think, or are Ingenuous; and if either of these be wanting, there is no true Title to the Character of being Reasonable or Upright.

Now it may be expected here, that I should shew the Standard of this Faith, or Necessary Persuasion, and the Rule to which we should thus strictly conform our Thoughts and Actions: But these depend upon the Truths asserted in the following *Essays*, to which I refer this Matter.

ESSAY III.

Of Faith as opposed to Atheism; and how a Belief of the Existence of God, is necessary to determine the certain Rule of Moral Actions.

I. **C**hristian Faith is of a large extent : First, it is opposed to *Doubling*, and signifies an hearty, inward Persuasion, (as has been shewed.) In the Second place, 'tis opposed to *Atheism*, and so is a *firm Belief of the Existence of a Deity*; a certain, full, and clear Persuasion that God *is*, and a sense of those Attributes which are necessarily included in the true Idea of God. *He (saith the Apostle) who cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them who diligently seek him, Heb. iv. 6.*

II. The Faith, spoken of in the former Essay, obligeth to enquire after this; and this we are now upon, enforceth the reasonableness and necessity of that; such is the relation betwixt them, and so mutually do they support one another. Not to *Criticize Grammatically* upon the words [*Lawful, and Unlawful*] which suppose a Superiour, even Good and Evil depend much, if not altogether, upon the Knowledge of God, and are to be measured by a Relation to him: the Nature of these will be found to vary very much, according as the Existence or Non-existence of a Deity is established. If Man have no Superiour, none to reward or punish his Actions, then I suppose the Government of himself is Arbitrary, as the chusing Employments is now thought to be; his chief business is to please himself; and consequently, Good and Evil are only to be considered with relation to one's self and his present Interest; which shall make as many different notions of Good and Evil, as there are different Humours, Inclinations, and Interests among Men. Good and Evil shall in that case have no certain Standard

dard by which to be measured, but shall be of as mutable a Nature, as Honesty and Dishonesty in a Divided Commonwealth, where the same thing is both Honesty and Knavery, in the Judgment of the different Parties, and where the same Person shall be both reputed a Hero and a Villain. Then no act can leave a guilt, and better or worse, well or ill done is to be measured by the Event and Success. And tho' Moral Laws can be shewed to have a Foundation in Nature, yet the transgression of them, for a particular Pleasure or Conveniency, will be thought no more culpable than to level a Mountain, to cut the course of a River, to force Water to ascend, and such like, which seem to be equal Violences to Nature; so that he who has a Liberty to do the one, may also do the other.

But the case is quite altered, if there be a God, for then we are no more at our own disposal than Servants: He who made us, has an absolute dominion over us; and all our care ought to be to please him: His Will is a Law and the perpetual Standard of Good and Evil.

III. However it is certain, that, (according to Scripture) none are reckoned Just or Righteous, but such as act with a continued regard to God, which sometimes is expressed by the *fear of God*, sometimes by *walking with him*, or *before him*, and having the *heart perfect or upright with God*. When *Hezekiah* pleaded his Integrity, it was in these words, *Remember, Lord, how I have walked before thee with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight*. Upon this account, *Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Joseph, Joshua, Job*, and all the other Worthies in Scripture are put into the Catalogue of the Just. And granting that there is a God, it will necessarily follow that he only is a Just Man, who sets God before him, who makes him the end and measure of his Actions, and the very design of whose Life is to please God: Nor can there be a more proper Character of an Unjust Man, than that by which the Wicked and Ungodly are described in Scripture, *Viz. They have not the fear of God be-*

fore their Eyes, God is not in all their thoughts, they are without God; that is, they have no consideration of him, nor regard unto him. He is not Just who doth not render to every Man what is due. If one keep square with others never so well, if he deal never so fairly by them, yet if he, at the same time, be unowardly, or undutiful to his Parents, he cannot properly be called Just. So let one possess all that is called Vertue towards Men, yet if God have not due Acknowledgment from him, that Man is neither Just nor Righteous. Nay, as he is not a good and faithful Servant, who does not sincerely intend his Master's Honour and Interest in all he doth; so (according to the Scripture) none can claim the titles of Just and Righteous, neither in anywise merit, but they only who do all for God's sake, and whose cheif Motive to do Good and forbear Evil is, because the one is acceptable to God, and the other offensive to him.

IV. Wherefore those Divines are much to be censured, who recommend Morality, and a good Life chiefly by other Topicks than these: for they are either ignorant of the Principles and Philosophy of the Scripture, or they discard the same to establish a better, and more plausible Scheme of things. They who profess to believe the Divine Authority of the Scripture, ought also to think that they are incapable to correct its Principles, or to establish what is more Just, or Wise: neither can they shew their Learning and Judgment better than by making it appear that they fully understand the Scope and Doctrine of the Scripture. But whatever Opinion they have of the Scripture, seeing their Profession obligeth them to teach it, they ought to do it candidly; that is, without mixing their own Fancies and Opinions. If one was appointed to read a Lecture of either Aristotelian, or Cartesian Philosophy, he could not be said to execute his office with ingenuity, who did not represent them purely according to their Authors, but who did blend them with other Principles. A righteousness built on the Principles of Self-love, Honour, Conveniency, Pleasure,

Pleasure, and such other Motives, is a Righteousness built on a Heathen Foundation, which cannot please God, no more than we do think our selves obliged by Acts and Deeds, which had no regard to us. I would not be thought by this to exclude all respect to our Private and Personal Interest; nor yet to disprove a humble and modest Enquiry into the reasonableness or excellency of the Divine Laws: But as the surest Proof, the clearest and shortest Demonstration of this, is drawn from the Existence, Nature, Will and Authority of God; Just as we best understand the Wisdom and Reasons of a Government, by considering what the King is, and what he proposes to himself. So the only design of this Enquiry should be to encourage our Obedience, to render it more ready and chearful, by convincing us, that he, who has the Authority over us, employs it most for our Advantage, that so the Servitude, which we owe by Nature, may become voluntary, that we may be incapable of revolting: and tho' we could be free, yet we may chuse rather to be Servants forever, like that Servant under the Law, who gave his Ear to be bored thorow, perfering (out of love to his Master) perpetual Bondage to his Freedom.

I know not whether it should move Indignation or Pity most, to see how pleasantly Men delude themselves with Suppositions of Mankind; their starting up free without all obligation, except to consult their own Pleasure and convenience. Some, who make these Suppositions, deny a Deity, and proceed without any Consideration of God. Others own a Deity, but they found our Obligation to him only on his possessing Wisdom, Reason and Knowledge in greater measure. But this state of Nature is a Dream and meer Romance, and all their Suppositions are wild, extravagant, against Reason and Nature, if Mankind had another beginning, if we all owe our being to another; for then we are not free, our Creation subjects us to him. We ought in the first place to regard his Will, which is a Law of indis-

22 *The Existence of God is most Evident.*

penfible Obligation, not by virtue only of the reasonableness of it, or the conveniency it brings with it, but by virtue of the Authority enjoining it. He is an open Rebel who has no regard to this Authority at all, and he, who prefers any thing to it, or has any other thing in greater consideration, has broke the first and greatest chain of Justice; he is not truly Loyal, but waits an opportunity to revolt. Tho' Rewards and Punishments be proposed, yet they are not intended for weakening the Authority of the Supream Lord; but to preserve it from contempt, and to heighten our regard for it. Which Rewards we ought to consider, and have always before us, both that we may know the Nature and Importance of those things to which they are annexed; and also, that by them we may be the more capable to serve and glorify God, to whom we owe infinite Service, if it were in our Power.

ESSAY IV.

The Existence of God is most Evident.

I. IF we enquire into the Nature of either Religion or Morality, we will find, after due consideration, that their foundation and first principle is Faith, or a Belief *that God is*, and that we derive our Life and Being from him; that he Rules and Governs the World; and that he is a *Rewarder of them who diligently seek him*. This comprehends all; and all other things are but Deductions from this. Shake this and all fall to the Ground; the whole Fabrick of Religion and Morality shivers into pieces. But then this cannot be shaken; It stands like a Rock, immoveable not withstanding all the furious blasts of insolent Men in the several Ages of the World; and perhaps never any of the

the former made so many, or so violent attacks at this present. This Foundation is surer than that of the World it self; for when the Foundation of the World shall be overturned, this shall stand sure to all Eternity, as it was before the Foundation of the world it self was laid.

II. And as it is sure and certain, so it is clear and evident. This is not a Truth which lies hid, or mysteriously wrap'd up, which requires depth of Judgment, vast Learning, assiduous Study, and great Pains to the digging it up: We may come at this, without undertaking long and dangerous Voyages, without the wearisome Study of Languages, without turning over many Volumes, without the trouble of consulting all the Wise and Learned, and collecting their Sentiments. This lies open to every Man of common Sense and Judgment, because it is what every Man should know, believe, and understand. The Necessaries of Life are common every where, and may be had in every Country by a reasonable Industry, which is no ways uneasie. What must be fetch'd from afar, with much expence and labour, doth rather please Fantasie, than serve Nature: So they are only *Indian Trifles* for amusing and sustaining a vain Curiosity, which for the most part are returned to us by the Laborious Travels of Learned Men. And tho' they produce also things Substantial, to give solid Delight and Satisfaction; yet even of these it must be said, that they are not absolutely necessary to give us Wisdom and Knowledge, to establish this Faith, which is the Ground-work and Foundation of all. What is necessary and sufficient for this, is obvious and at hand, that all may be without excuse; for which cause I may apply these words of Moses, *This is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, who shall go for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it. Neither is it beyond the Sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the Sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it; but this word of Faith is very nigh unto thee, in*
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24 *The Existence of God is most Evident.*

thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, that thou mayst do it, Deut. xxx. 12. That is, the Evidence of this Faith depends not on the knowledge of what is transacted in these upper Regions, nor on what passeth in the remote Parts of the World; but the Evidence of it lies in every Man's own Bosom: His own Mind (if he hearken to it) can make him conscious of this Truth: That thing within him (whatever it be) which makes him sensible of other things, can convince him of this.

III. Because I intend to speak intelligibly to all, what the meanest Capacity may comprehend. I will not run into the Philosophical Debate about *innate Ideas*; I will not enquire, whether all be born with an Idea of God, nor of what force that is, to demonstrate his Existence; but whether the Mind of Man come to the World void of all Notions, or prepossessed with Principles, by which it is to examine all things afterwards: it is certain, that it is capable of discerning things when duely set before it; as the Eye is capable of distinguishing objects and colours in a clear light, and at a due distance. If the Mind cannot refuse an assent to some things, if upon every representation of them it owns a Conviction, and cannot without violence work it self into a denial; it is all a matter, whether this be from *innate Principles*, or the *natural Evidence* of these things themselves. And that there are some things clearer and more evident than *Demonstration* it self, appears from this, that even *Mathematical Demonstration* proceeds upon the supposition of this, and requires them as *Postulata*. Now the Mathematicians have only considered such *Axioms* as relate to Lines, Figures, and Bodies: There are other *Principles* as self evident as these; whence comes that the Voice of Nature is Uniform, and that there is a common consent of Mankind: Wherefore it is no *Paradox* to say, that the Existence of God, and the Principles of Morality are not only as certain, but more evident than the *Propositions* of *Euclid*, because the generality of Mankind have always easily (by the very bent of their Nature) given

an assent unto them; and the greatest Barbarity and Corruption could never entirely deface them. Some Mens Genius is not capable of Mathematicks, but all are capable of Morality; and the reason of it is so plain, that every unbyass'd Mind assents to it.

That there are Debates about some Moral Principles, and particularly this of a Deity, is no more an Objection against the Evidence thereof, than the Arguments of *Zeno* against the Possibility of Motion, or the Sophistry of the Scepticks against the certainty of these things which fall under our senses. There are some things which a Child can distinguish as well as any of riper Years, and which a Country Clown may Judge of as well as a Philosopher; and consequently common Sense and Reason may be known from the one as well as the other, nay, very often better: for the one speaketh what his Mind naturally dictates, whereas the other being amused with the Notions he hath read, which his Head always runs upon: He discourseth according to these, and so perverteth his Natural Reason very much. The most simple Person can at first sight distinguish *Natural Things* from *Artificial*, and without hesitation, without waiting a deduction of *Logical Inferences* is presently convinced, that both the one and the other has a cause, and did not spring from themselves. None was ever so senseless as to think a House was built without Hands; and any of common sense seeth, that *Natural Things* far excell those of *Art*, being more curiously wrought, more admirably contrived, being more beautiful, serving to more uses; and in a word, every way more perfect. Therefore leave Men to the freedom of their own reason, they would as readily believe a God, as that a House had a Builder, or a Watch an Artificer.

IV. Some will not yield that there are, or can be real Atheists; because it implies such absurdity. But we see daily instances of Men's swallowing very gross Absurdities: Nay, there is hardly any absurdity which some or other has not received: which should teach the wisest to walk

26 *The Existence of God is most Evident.*

walk with fear, and to preserve their reason carefully. If there be no Atheists, some take a great deal of Pains to no purpose ; for they are at much ado to perswade us that they themselves are, and to bring others to be Atheists.

But as I see no reason to doubt that there are such, tho' very much reason that there should be none. So Mens Atheism proceeds either, 1st. From their Viciousness, which first breeds in them a dislike of God, and then carries them to dispute his Providence, and at last his Existence. Just as they who are embarked in some Design, which makes them dread the King, first Quarrel with his Government, and then deny his right and title. Or, 2^{dly}. It arises from the Difficulties which they meet with in the Contemplation of his Nature and Attributes ; because they cannot clear or comprehend these, therefore they deny his Being, thinking it better to deny what is plain and evident, than to own their Ignorance, or the shortness of their Reason, than which nothing can be more unreasonable, as we may have occasion to shew afterwards. Is it reasonable to deny plain and common things, because there are some things without our reach ? Shall I put out my Eyes because they fail me in some particulars ? because they do not reach beyond the Clouds, nor penetrate into the *Secrets of Nature* ? Difficulties which are insuperable may put a stop to further Enquiries, and make it reasonable not to determine any thing positively in these Matters where we find them : but they can never make it reasonable to deny what was clearly perceived before these occurred.

Tho' the Divine Essence be incomprehensible, because infinite, and because it does not fall under our sense, tho the ways and Workings of God be unsearchable and past finding out, yet plainer and more certain Evidences cannot be desired of united Wisdom and Power, than what we have continually before us ; nay, carry about with us in our own selves. As soon as one casts his Eye seriously upon them, he will be convinced : He that considers them,

them, will undoubtedly acknowledge them. Therefore a Third Cause of Atheism is want of Consideration and Reflection. Some are Atheists, because they do not think; their Souls are always asleep, and they never open the Eyes of their Mind to behold, by a wise regard, the many Prodigies of Omniscient Power, the beautiful Scenes, the curious and admirable contrivances of Almighty Wisdom, with which the World is filled. They are like those sensual, dull, and uninquisitive Souls, which creep about the Palaces of Princes, on the account of the Meat and Drink, which is to be had there in plenty. They mind nothing but the cramming their Bellies, and are altogether insensible of the *Stately Magnificence*, the *Curious Architecture*, the *fine Sculpture* and *Painting*, which draws Strangers thither from all Parts of the World. He, who leads such a life, should be set to graze with the Beasts, for his life is not much better than theirs, and his Soul seems to be altogether sensitive.

It is the Property of Man to think: his Dignity above the other Creatures lies in a power of discerning and understanding things, their Nature, Ends, and Uses, their relation to each other, their cause and contrivance, and what else may enlarge the Mind with Wisdom and Knowledge to which he bends (when free) as naturally as a Stone to the Earth. He, who does not employ his Thoughts these ways, abdicates the Dignity of his Nature; and he who thus carefully maintains it, will be full of God, if I may so speak, God will be in all his thoughts, for he shall see him every where before him, behind him, on every side, and in every thing. As the foolish Jews asked a sign of Jesus Christ, when according to their Hypotheses, and the Supposition of their Law and Prophets which they themselves believed, every word he spake, and every work he did was a Sign. So some unreasonably demand a proof or Demonstration of a Deity, whilst they walk in the midst of Demonstrations, and do tread on them every step. If we cannot see his invisible Essence, yet upon the first opening
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our Eyes, we discern unquestionable Effects of his Essential Attributes: And if they do not affect us, because they are common and ordinary, it bewrays our want of Judgment and Consideration; for the excellency of a thing lies not in its being rare and singular, but in the design, contrivance, and usefulness. Is the Art of a Watch less to be regarded, or doth the Memory of the first Inventor deserve less honour; because now adays every body carries one in his Pocket; and that perhaps some of no great capacity are taught to work them.

ESSAY V.

Evidences of a Deity in Man.

I. **G**ENERALS do not much affect us, nor are things distinctly known by a general view of them, we then see and understand them best, when we consider each apart by it self. The World is too large a Prospect to be taken up at once; we will therefore descend to particulars, and shall begin at home. Take a view but of the outward make and Figure of the Body of Man; Consider the Variety of Parts, the Symmetry, Situation and Proportion, either in respect to the whole, or to each other; the firmness of the Feet, the strength of the legs, the well-compacted thickness of the Thighs, the stateliness of the Trunk, the force of the Arms, the contrivance and innumerable uses of the Hand, the comeliness and beauty of the Face, the majesty of the Countenance, and the ornament of the Hair. The finest Painters and most curious Statuaries think they cannot shew their Skill better, than to imitate these; and tho' the best imitation of them be very rude in Comparison with the Original, yet even these rude Counterfeits have been much admired, and have procured much Honour and Fame to those who made them. Now if the Copy be
admired,

admired, what doth the Original deserve? If the Picture or Statue shew Art and Skill, shall the Original be ascribed to chance? Is it not more reasonable to think that it is the work of some wise and excellent Hand?

II. Especially if we penetrate into the Inward Frame and texture, which is altogether unimitable: none was ever so mad as to attempt it. When the outward covering of the Skin, which also is admirable, being a Net of Nerves curiously interwoven, when this (I say) is laid aside, what a wonderful Contrivance appears of Bones, Muscles, Arteries, Nerves, and other Vessels, which both astonish the wisest, and also afford them matter of curious Enquiry. Since the Beginning of the World all the wise and curious have been prying into the Body of Man, Dissecting and Anatomizing the Parts of it. Some have spent their whole life in considering but one particular Part; and yet after so many Thousand Years, there is no perfect discovery, either of the whole, or almost of any part. There is a *terra incognita* even in this little World. As there are at this day better Anatomists than whom former Ages could boast of: So the most Skilful do acknowledge ingenuously, that they discern neither all the Parts of this admirable Machine, nor yet all the true Uses of those Parts which have been discovered. All the Functions of the Brain and Spleen are not yet understood; and it is but meer Conjecture what is said of several others. Is it not then against common sense to ascribe to any thing but perfect Wisdom, what is thus above the reach of the wisest Men, and what puzzles them to comprehend!

III. To give further Conviction of this truth, let *Life Motion*, and *Sense* be considered. What admirable and exquisite Wisdom doth appear in the frame and disposal of the *Senses*! As in a City invested with Enemies, and in danger to be betrayed, it is necessary to advert to all the Motions of those within, and to keep Watch at all the *Ramparts*, and other places proper for discovering the Advances and dangerous Approaches of the Enemy. So
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it is necessary to the preservation of the Body, that both its outward and inward state be perfectly understood, that all the Motions within, and all applications without be felt, that it may be presently known what are hurtful, and what convenient, what should be cherished, and what prevented; wherefore we see that the *Organs* of this *Sense of Feeling* are posted every where throughout the Body; so that the least disturbance within, and the slightest touch without, even in the Extremities, is instantly perceived.

Tasting being designed for distinguishing Meats, and for discerning what is agreeable: therefore the instrument of this *Sense* is the *fore-part* of the Tongue, which lies at the very Gates of the first entry or passage to the Stomach to secure against what is disagreeable: For if the Faculty of *Tasting* had been placed more inwards, the disgorging unsavory things would have been very inconvenient.

Because all the ends and purposes of *Smelling* may be served by *one Organ*, therefore there is no more, but that is curiously formed, and admirably fitted to receive the insensible Particles, which evaporate from all Material Substances, whether animate or inanimate, natural or composed. However the *Organ* of this *Sense* is grosser in Man, than in some other Animals, because they require it far more exquisite. For Example, If the Dog had not this *Sense* in a nicer measure than Man, he would not be worth keeping; for then he could neither trace out his Master's footsteps, nor yet find out where the Partridge feeds, or the Hare has her Seat, which certainly never happened by Accident. If this be not Design, we may make Design and Chance all one; for it is impossible to distinguish them.

The *two other Senses* being by far the most Delightful and Profitable, therefore each has *two Organs*, most wisely situated, and most admirably contrived to answer the purposes of these two Faculties. The Fabrick and Motion of the Eye is so curious, that never any yet did consider

consider it without wonder and astonishment. This is the foundation of the *Opticks*, which is the most pleasant and curious part of Mathematicks. Upon which account, I must say, That if there be Mathematicians who are Atheists, they are of all others most inexcusable: For seeing Vision, and the Fabrick and Motion of the Eye, by which it is performed, is according to the strictest Rules of Mathematicks, and that he must be a Master of that Art, who can unfold the Method and Manner of Vision, and explain the Reasons of it. Is it not the height of Impudence? Is it not a Violence to common Sense? Is it not to contradict and baffle Demonstration it self, either to think or say that Vision was contrived, or the Eye framed without Wisdom, or that the Author thereof was not skilled in the Nature of Light, the Rules of Motion, the Doctrine of Refraction and Reflection, without which the Eye had been no Eye, nor Vision ever effectuated? To secure this necessary Organ from danger, it is lodged in a well adapted *bony Orbis*; and because only a Body of a Spherical Figure can move easily within another, especially when the whole space is to be filled up, therefore the Eye is Spherical, which is the only Figure capable of those many Motions which are necessary for discerning the various Objects which surround us; and both to facilitate these Motions, and for performing them rightly, it is tied by various Muscles, interwoven with many Nerves; by the means of which, it moves up and down and to either side easily. These Muscles are also so situated that one is a kind of a curb to the motion of the other, least the Eye should be in hazard of being renversed: Moreover, they serve to keep the Eye fixed upon Objects, as long as there is occasion to look at them. The Eye-lids are not only for a cover when we are asleep; but also they serve to clean and clear it by their Motions, which could not be so safely done by the Hand. As the Eye giveth Life and Beauty to the Countenance, and discovers the inward Thoughts and hidden Temper both of Body and Mind; so nothing could have been more admirably

rably contrived for Vision ; being composed of various humours contained in different coats. The *Cornea* or *White* is convex, and receiveth different degrees of Convexity, according as the Objects are far or near : and to render it capable of changing its Figure thus, the humour next to it is thin, liquid, and pliable, which is therefore called *Aqueous*. The *Pupilla* or *Sight* doth dilate and contract it self as there is more or less Light. And because various distances of Objects require different Positions of the *Cryſtalline humour*, through which the Rays of Light paſs to the *Retina* where they form the Image of the external Object : For Rays from a nearer Object unite at a greater distance than thoſe which come from an Object more remote ; therefore the *Cryſtalline humour* is preſſed upon the *Retina*, by what Anatomists call *Ligamentum Ciliare*, and yet it is kept by the *Vitrious humour* at ſuch a due diſtance as is neceſſary for uniting the Rays exactly upon it. And that the Image of the Object, which is formed upon the *Retina*, may not be diſordered by a Reflexion of the Rays which paſs through it, therefore the *Choroides* or coat which ſurrounds it, is tintured black, which doth reflect fewer Rays than any other Colour, and is therefore fitteſt to preſerve the diſtinct Viſion of external Objects. The *Retina*, upon which the Image of all external Objects is formed, is not above an inch and a half ; and yet without Calculation or conſulting Experience, or Arithmetical Tables of Proportion, we are made to perceive all Objects diſtinctly in their juſt and real Proportions and at their true Diſtances, which is a moſt wonderful Contrivance, altogether impoſſible without infinite Power and Wiſdom, as both this and ſome other particulars of Viſion are inexplicable by humane Reaſon.

Nor is the *Ear* leſs curious than the *Eye*: Some offer to prove it more Artificial ; but, Compariſons here (as in other things) are to no purpoſe. Certainly, there are as many (if not more) diſtinct Parts in the Fabrick of the *Ear* than *Eye*. But it not being my deſign to give an
Anato-

Anatomical Discourse, I will not offer to dissect it. Notice of all external Sound is given by a *delicate Membrane*, which is guarded by a *viscous Substance*, lest rude and violent Percussions should break it. There are wonderful *Cavities* for receiving the impressions and beatings upon this Membrane, for reverberating them, for modifying and distinguishing them, that they may be clearly understood. All which can be ascribed to nothing less than infinite Wisdom, which contrived the *Eye*, to give us the most delightful Prospect of the most pleasant *Scenes* of the *Divine Opera*; and which formed the Ear to entertain us with the sweet *Notes* which the most Melodious *feathered Chorus* Sing to the Praises of their Creator, and especially that by these means our Souls, tho' strictly chained to, and closely detained in the Body, may be capable of communicating their Thoughts to one another.

IV. Which leads me to the *internal and intellectual Faculties*; the vast Capacity of the Mind, the quick and lively force of the Imagination, the incomprehensible Storehouse of the Memory, where Myriads of things are laid up without any Confusion, but ranged in that good order, as a very Thought can produce them in a Moment. Without this wonderfull faculty of Memory, Reason and Understanding would serve to little purpose. But this is a large Subject, I dare not attempt, lest I be carried too far, or should utter things not so obvious, or which might occasion debate. I only mark the excellency and usefulness of *these Faculties*, which every one can understand. It is by the means of these that we think, reason, discourse, arrive at Wisdom and Knowledge, by comparing things together, considering their Mutual Relations, by Judging the present from what is past, by running the Effects up to their Cause, and by taking measures, both of Natural and Moral Events and Productions, from the Nature and Conjunction of Causes. By all which method and manner of reasoning, we constantly find that *every thing must have a Cause, for nothing*

can produce nothing; nor can any thing give to another the perfection which it self wants. Motion must have a Mover: Life must proceed from something that Lives, and Art and Contrivance from one or other that understands the same; and consequently the whole System of our Reason must be overturned, the first Principles of Knowledge rejected, and the clearest Perception denied, if he who planted the Ear did not hear, if he who formed the Eye did not see, if he who teacheth man Knowledge doth not know. In a word, if the Author of our Being be not infinitely Wise and Powerful, to which all mankind have given their consent; for as the Latin Orator, and some others have observed, there was never yet found any Nation or People who did not acknowledge a God.

I crave leave to add some few Thoughts more for evincing this.

V. One is taken from the wonderful Contrivance of *nourishing the Body*, and supplying all its Parts. Many rare Inventions have been ruined, because they could not be sustained or repaired: When the secret Springs broke, they perished; and what a trouble is it to uphold the Machines of *Humane contrivance*, or to keep them a going? But as the Author of our Being did foresee that our Bodies were liable to decay, and did waste themselves by acting and moving; so he has most wisely provided against that Evil; and has laid down a wonderful *easy Method* of sending Recruits to all the Parts, far and near; nay, even to those which are wrap'd up in the Heart of others, without doing prejudice to the surrounding Vessels, which is by receiving a little proper Food into the Mouth, from whence after chewing and mastication, it is conveyed into the Stomach, where it is digested into a liquid Substance, whether by heat or acidity, or both, or by the Motion of the Stomach it self we shall not debate. But however it be, there is a speedy *Dissolution* of what comes there, and a better *Secretion* or *Separation* of the *different Substances* after *Dissolution*, than can be by the most expert Chymist. Which
Prepa-

Preparation being made, it is instantly discharged into Pipes and Canals of different sizes, and strangely intersected, which supply every Part with what is necessary; so that the remote Parts are not neglected, nor the nearer ones sooner supplied: all are equally provided and taken care of, and at the same instant refreshed. When the Body is faint and feeble, seems to have lost all its Spirits, and upon the point of expiring, how suddenly doth a little Food recover it? how soon is its colour renewed? and how instantly doth it begin to exert strength and vigour? should this be passed over because common? should it be slighted because ordinary? should we not regard this wonderful Device, by which our Life is maintained from Day to Day? Methinks, those who are so well pleased with Eating and Drinking, should thank the Contrivance. Upon this is founded the Custom of asking a *Blessing before Meat*, and of giving *Thanks after*; and to say the truth, it is not only laudable, but more reasonable and necessary than is commonly believed.

VI. And as the *Nourishment of the Body* doth ascribe Wisdom to its Author, so both his Wisdom and Power doth appear in its *Generation*. What an unlikely beginning has it? how unaccountable that an *homogeneous fluid* should be the foundation of such an *heterogeneous solid*? We are sure it is, but how it comes to be cannot be comprehended. The manner of this production is as much hid from our Understanding, as the place from our Eyes. The wisest Philosophers are but Children here; their Principles of Mechanism can give no light to this Affair; all they say, is but a heap of fanciful and groundless Conjectures. Nor do I believe the sole Power of what is called Nature sufficient; there must be the guidance of an intelligent Spirit, to regulate Nature, and to see it perform its Duty. As in a Watch, all the Wheels and Parts have a mutual dependance on each other, and do regulate one another's Motions, and cannot move without the Spring: nor this, unless it be wound up by some Hand: So there is a mutual dependency among the Parts of the

Body: They must be all formed at once, and must all perform their Functions together, otherwise not any of them can act or move. The *Circulation of the Blood* is the Cause of *Animal Motion*, or absolutely necessary to it, and the means of Nourishment. The Blood cannot circulate without the *Motion of the Heart*, nor the Heart move without *Animal Spirits*: Nor are *Animal Spirits* formed but by the *Circulation and Secretion* of the Blood; therefore there must be some supervenient Power to influence them all *simul & semel*, to breathe Life into them, and to set them a going, and if it be said that this is now performed by the *Mood and Spirits* of the Mother, which circulate in the *fœtus*, yet the Argument holds still against the formation of the *first Man*, without supernatural Aid; which makes out my purpose, and which is agreeable to the account we have of Man's Creation in *Genesis*, where it is said, that God *formed Man out of the Ground*, and then *breathed into his Nostrils the breath of Life*; that is, by his Almighty Power he wrought a lumpish piece of Earth into that wonderful Machine of Man's Body: But the Creation and Conjunction of those external and internal Parts, not being sufficient to give it *Life and Motion*; he also afterwards inspired this, by a second Supernatural act of breathing into him. But to leave Philosophizing, and to return to our Subject, how doth the unsuitable and improbable matter from which we proceed, argue the Almighty Power of him who contriv'd it? And was it possible, without infinite Wisdom, to provide so wonderfully for the Nourishment and Safety of the Child during the Nine Months that it continues in the Womb? from which Prison it is also delivered in a strange manner, which merits Admiration. When all these things are considered, how much truth and force is in that divine Hymn of *David*, where he Commemorates his Generation and Production, and where he saith, *God hath possessed my Reins, thou hast covered me in my Mothers Womb. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvellous are thy Works, and that my*
Soul

Soul knoweth right well. My Substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the Earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy Book all my Members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them, Psal. cxxxix. 13, &c. Job also hath spoken as Philosophically, and much more truly, than any who hath attempted to explain the formation of the Fœtus, and that in a very few words; thus, *Hast not thou poured me out as Milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with Skin, and fenced me with Bones and Sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my Spirit,* Job x. 10.

VII. Once more let it be considered how admirably each Part is fitted for the use to which it is destined: And as a great many perform their Motions without our concurrence, so these external Members, which are at the command of our will, do follow our thoughts quickly and readily, without previous Preparation, or so much as a Minute of time intervening. Nothing is quicker than a Thought, and yet as soon as we will it, the Tongue speaks, the Hand acts, and the Feet walk, &c. and all of them again cease their Motion just as we think it; such a close dependance there is of these Members upon our Minds or Faculty of Thinking. One cannot Play well or distinctly upon any Instrument before he can distinguish the Strings, and untill he learn what touches are proper to make the different Notes. But we are not taught the distinct and proper Muscles, Nerves, &c. by which our Members move: Nor do we so much as understand how they move them, and yet all is done, as if we had a distinct and perfect Knowledge, and that too with the swiftness of our Thoughts; for our Thoughts and these Members keep pace together, if there be no obstruction and hinderance; and if it were not so, we should be under great Disadvantages. I could bring several other Instances to prove, that the Structure and Oeconomy of the Humane Body is a most wonderful

and artificial Contrivance, which can be ascribed to nothing less than infinite Power and Wisdom, and consequently that it is a Demonstration of a Deity.

ESSAY VI.

Evidences of a Deity in other Parts of the World.

AS it is of the highest importance to know whether there is a God, so we need not go far to be convinced; for upon the first serious inspection it doth appear that every one of us carrieth in us, and about us, a *Demonstration of the Deity*, Whenever we look upon our selves, we see him; for we read his Wisdom and Power in our Make and Frame, in our first Production and daily Preservation, and by both our external and internal Senses.

I. But if one Evidence be not sufficient for so weighty a Point, let us interrogate other *Creatures*, and they will all unanimously answer the same thing. We are indeed a wonderfull Work, but we are not the only Work of our Maker, he hath framed other Pieces besides; which no less manifest his great Power and unsearchable Wisdom. It is evident that he who made us, made other things, and had both of us in his view when he made either. What should be the use of an *Eye*, if there was not *Light*? And to what purpose should there be *Light*, if there was no *Eye* to see it, nor any Creature to discern the Beauties which it discovers. He then, who formed the *Eye*, created the *Light*; and he who ordained *Light*, resolved to have a Creature capable of Seeing. We cannot live without Food; nor can the Earth afford us necessary Food without the warm and kind influences of the Sun: that therefore there should be a Sun to render the Earth fruitful, by its benign influences, could not be Chance, but Contrivance, and this proves an intelligent Being.

II. If

II. If there was but one instance that looked like Art and Design, we should not lay much stress on't; we might be tempted to think that was only a lucky hit of *blind Fortune*. But we have many Thousand instances in the Heavens, in the Earth, and in the Seas, in both the Vegetable and Animal World, where each individual is not only wonderfully contrived in reference to the Ends and Uses of its particular being; but also in reference to one another: for they are admirably fitted to one another, and are made to serve other most wisely: The *Universal Frame* is as a huge Machine; the vast Globes above and this in which we dwell, are as so many Wheels and suitable Parts, which the Artist hath most Skilfully joined, that not only each may have its proper Motion easily, but that the particular Motion of one may be beneficial to another, and all of them serviceable to the general Design. Was it possible to put so many stupendous masses of Matter in motion without Omnipotency? We may as well imagine that an Ant or Worm may cause an Earthquake. And what less than Infinite Wisdom could so adjust and direct their Motions, that no part can jolt out of its place, nor interfere with another. A Fleet of 500 Sail can hardly keep together without falling foul on each other: and behold those innumerable and prodigious Globes move continually in their immense space, without rubbing, though they naturally gravitate towards one another, which shews that they are steered by a most dexterous Pilot. What *Job* saith of the Earth, is applicable to all the rest, *viz.* That it is *hanged upon Nothing*. They have no Natural or Mechanical Support, but are only sustained by the Almighty Word of God: For they move in an empty space, and therefore nothing but his Word keeps them from tumbling upon one another. Neither is there any other cause of their constant and regular Motions for serving and promoting their appointed Ends. He appointed the *Moons for seasons*, and therefore it still keeps that course which shews different *phases* or appearances

pearances to the several Parts of the World. He ordained this to *rule the Night*, to be a Lamp for directing the Inhabitants of the Earth, when the Sun is gone down; and it never fails to shine in its due time. But nothing can be a greater Demonstration of Infinite Wisdom, than the Course of the Sun. The Argument is of equal force, if the Sun be supposed fix'd, and the Earth to move about it. But to speak to vulgar appearance: If the Sun stood always still, or was either nearer or farther off, or did move by any other than the present Annual and Diurnal Motion, What Inconveniencies would follow? Then the Earth should be all a Frigid Zone, or burnt up at once according to the Fable of *Phaeton*; then there would be neither Seed-time nor Harvest, nor Summer nor Winter, nor those changes of Seasons, which are so universally useful and comfortable. How sad and desolate would the Earth be, if it wanted the Heat and Light of the Sun? And how absurd is it, to suppose that this great Comfort of Man and Beast could be dispensed so equally, to all Parts of the Earth, without the greatest Wisdom? And we shall be further confirmed, that the Sun was so placed and is still so disposed only by Infinite Wisdom, when we consider that it serves for the same uses to the other Planets; for by the curious and admirable Observations of Astronomers, they are found to be of the same nature with the Earth, and to have no Light or Heat but what they receive from the Sun; for which cause they also move round their own *Axis* and about the Sun. Who then can resist the Wisdom of the Sun's Situation? What Impudence is it to deny such a stupendous Contrivance for dispensing and one at the same time the necessary Influence of Light and Heat to so many prodigious Globes. Wherefore, as the Psalmist has observed, certainly *the Heavens declare the Glory of God; and the Firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto Day uttereth speech, and Night unto Night sheweth knowledge; nor is there any Language where their voice is not heard; that is, though the several Nations of the World speak with*

with different Tongues , which makes them that they cannot understand each other ; yet the Heavenly Bodies, by their regular and useful Motions, speak an *Universal Language* intelligible to all of common Sense, for convincing them that they are the Work and Contrivance of an Almighty and most Wise God. He must be naturally deaf and without judgment, the faculties of his Mind must be strangely corrupted, who is not affected and convinced by these things.

III. Again, Let us consider the *Vegetable* and *Animal World* as a well-govern'd Common wealth, where the People are wisely employed according to their Stations and Capacities, whose different Employments breed no Confusion, but do preserve the Order and Peace of the State, and promote its Wealth, Power, Strength and Glory. The Earth sends forth Trees, Herbs, and Plants of all sorts for Food or Medicine, to serve the Necessities or Advantages of humane Life ; and all these spring up in their proper Situation, as if planted by the Hand of some Skilful Gardner, which are sorted into different Climates, to whet and encourage Industry, for engaging and securing a good Correspondence amongst Men. Animals are destined to several Uses, and are assigned to such Regions as are proper to their Nature and these Uses. Fowls have the Air to rove in ; Fishes sport themselves in the Waters ; and Quadrupeds walk on firm Land ; Camels are allotted to *Arabia*, where there is no Water. Salvage Beasts are sent to Desarts, where they may do less Harm ; and they who are mild, tractable, and useful, are kept amongst Men. Such Animals as are dangerous to others, or of less Use, are generally barren and unfruitful, whereas other Kinds do multiply in Abundance : For there would be no Living in the World, if Lions, Tigres, Bears, Wolves, Foxes, and the like, were as numerous as Sheep and Oxen. And the Air should shortly be dispeopled of its feathered Inhabitants, if the Vulture, Eagle, and Hawk, could draw out Armies like the Flocks of Crows and Pigeons.

Now

Now who impos'd these hard Laws upon those Beasts and Birds of Prey? What *Pharaoh* forbid them to multiply to the danger of the State? Is it possible that the Terror of Man could have made them drown or destroy their Brood? Was it by the Art of Man that Foxes, Wolves, &c. produce all Dogs, and almost but one Bitch at every Litter, whereas other Animals bring forth Males and Females equally. Can this proceed from any but the wise and potent Author of all things? But to go on; the climbing Goats feed upon the Rocks; the simple Sheep and unweildy Oxen graze in the Valleys, and the frighted Deer are removed to range in the Woods. The fierce and undaunted Horse is appointed for the Battle; the Ox to Labour, the Sheep for Food and Cloathing: the Hare and Partridge for Diversion, and the Hound and the Hawk for catching them. Thus there is Use and Design to be seen in every Creature, nay, even in Insects and creeping Things, which we look upon with so much Contempt. The very common dull Worm hath its Use; and lest they should be over numerous, the blind Mole is given to check them. But how useful is the Silk-Worm? What a Treasure doth it yield? And how splendid are Men by its Labour? What might be said of the Bee? Its Conduct and Industry are admirable; like an excellent Chymist, it extracts the mellous Juice from the Herbs and Flowers, but does not spoil their Beauty and Figure, as Chymists do by their Operations. It admirably composes Wax, which serves to many Uses, and yet conceals from Mankind both the Matter and Art of that Composition; for it not yet discovered: For they are mistaken, who think that with which their Thighs are loaded is the Substance of Wax; for this is of different Colors, whereas the Combs at first are almost a pure white: And besides, I my self have observed several Cells in the Combs, filled with that Matter which is upon their Thighs, but for what Use I have not yet discover'd, except it be for hatching their Eggs.

IV. If any Object, the Locust and Caterpillar; they may well upbraid the Prudence and Policy of a State for keeping Forces, which generally are made up of very rude and insolent People; for these are a Party of the Army of the Lord of Hosts, which he sends out at his pleasure, to chastise the Pride, Wantonness, Ingratitude, and Forgetfulness of Man, who is the only disorderly Part of the Creation: He only breaks the Peace and moves Sedition in this excellent and large Common-Wealth; and he does to his own Prejudice, as generally all rebellious and seditious People use to do: But his unruly and disorderly Behaviour is no Ground of impeaching the Wisdom of the Almighty Head of this great Common-Wealth of the World, far less than the rebellious and seditious practising of Subjects is chargeable upon the Government, who often times (as all Histories inform us) run into it without just Provocation, through their own Wantonness or Ignorance, or foolish Fears, or the evil Counsel of cunning Men, who make them misapprehend some things, and beguile them with a Pretence of making other things better, which in the end turns worse. All the Disorders in this Universal State, which is made up of all Creatures, proceed from these very Causes, which give Disturbance to particular humane States. If I may be allowed to borrow a little Light from *Revelation*, when I reason against Atheism: The Devil or *Lucifer* being proud, and full of himself, became disaffected, and turned Male content: and to make himself a Party, he addressed to Man, preying upon his Weakness and Inadvertency, whom having once deluded, he still keeps into that rebellious Interest, by suggesting evil Thoughts, cherishing their Corruption and bad Inclinations.

V. Some may say, That this overturns all we have said about Design and Contrivance, seeing it seems to prove a grand Mistake in the Master-piece. If the World, the several Parts in it, and the Conjunction of these Parts be the work of infinite Wisdom, would one have been made to disturb all the rest, to disorder the whole

whole Contrivance? Or would the Power and Dominion over these have been committed to one altogether unqualified and unworthy of it, as Man seems to be? Or must it be said, That the contriving of vegetative and sensitive things was within the Skill of this wise Being, but that rational things, or what is of a higher Nature, is above his Reach; and therefore he missed his Aim, and came short of his Design? No, none of these things follow. The Almighty God would shew his Power and Wisdom by creating an Infinite Variety of Beings, endued with all Degrees of Perfections; and therefore one who was to be free, to be entrusted with the Government of himself, and who was to be under no other Force than that of Reason and Truth, nor to have any — other Tyes than that of Gratitude and Interest, which he might know sufficiently by the Exercise of his intellectual Faculties, and the Application of his Mind to what is always before him. Other things could not be left to themselves; being endued with no Sense or Reason of their own, they are still guided by the Wisdom of their Maker; and hence it is that they never step aside, but always move regularly: Infinite Wisdom appears in all their Motions, and from this it is that some Creatures without Sense, and others which have no more than Sense, do out-do all the works of Men: Without Understanding, some know the Rules of Architecture, the Nature and Uses of things, and the means of compassing them better than Man with all his Reason, and after all his Study and Application. Which is demonstrable by various Instances and particularly from the Swallows Nest, the Spiders Circular Web which hath diverse Diametrical Lines or Cords passing from the Centre through all the Circles to that which is outmost, and the Sexangular Combs of Bees, which figure is of all others the most capacious and solid and consequently most proper. The Perfection of *human Art* is but a faint Imitation of what other Creatures do by that which is called *Natural Instinct*, which is truly the Guidance of

of that Infinite Wisdom which contrived them. Mens best Knowledge, is but experience and Observation from the inferiour Creatures. And as it thus appears, that those Creatures are under the Management of their Maker, whose Wisdom manifests it self in their Motions and Actings: So it is no Defect in this most perfect Wisdom, that Men do not act perfectly or exactly right, because they are left to their own Freedom, and the Direction of an imperfect and limited Reason, which yet was sufficient, if they had adverted to the Marks and Instructions given them.

As by Revelation we are assured that Man was at first made upright, so there are Reasons and Prints to convince us of it without Revelation. And as he is endued with Perfections above others in this part of the World, with intellectual Faculties which they want, so it seems evident, that all those other things were invented to be subject Matter for those intellectual Faculties to work upon. Pictures are not hang'd up but to be seen; for they cannot talk together; so neither can Plants or Beasts. This World therefore would have been but as a wast House; tho' richly furnish'd, yet it would have been altogether desolate of Inhabitants, if there had been wanting one of Understanding and Judgment, and capable of making wise Reflections on what there is in it. Man's Life would be very miserable if he had not the Service of those other Creatures, and they would be useless if it were not with a Respect unto him. Either they were designed to administer unto him, or he was made to receive the Advantage which redounds from them: They are excellently fitted to one another, which could only proceed from an intelligent Being of infinite Wisdom and Power.

Thus there are so many and so great Instances of Design and Contrivance, that no thinking Man is able to resist this *Faith* in God. He who doth not admit this Faith, must be strangely stupid, and consequently much to be pitied, or unreasonably obstinate, and therefore exceedingly censurable.

VI. I would ask such Persons what they would be at to satisfy them? Do they require a Sight of God? They may as reasonably ask to see a Voice, to touch a Tune, or to try the Objects of one Sense by another, as Colours by the Ear, and Odours by the Eye. Will they deny the intellectual Faculties of Perception, Judgment, Reasoning, Memory, &c. to be in others, because they have no immediate Intuition of them? Is it not sufficient Demonstration, that this, or the other Man doth possess these Faculties, when the one or the other sheweth the proper Signs of them, and that the necessary Effects thereof may be perceived in his Discourse and Actions! And what greater Demonstration would any have of an Almighty, Intelligent Being, than prodigious and infinite Instances of Wisdom and Power, such as the World every where presents us with! God's Essence is invisible at least to us. What Organs the Angels of Heaven have for beholding him, we do not know; but *he dwelleth in a Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath seen, nor can see.* But that which may be known of God is manifest, for *he hath shew'd it; for the Invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head; so that they are without Excuse, viz. who doubt or deny a Deity, or who are not perswaded of his Eternity, Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, and who doth not glorify him as such.*

VII. If God was not eternal, nothing could have been made, for there was then nothing to have produced any thing; therefore his eternal Existence is evidently proved by the Existence of other things, which do not exist necessarily: And there is not any thing but himself which has necessary Existence included in its Idea. And though the creating of any one thing was a Demonstration of his Almighty Power and Wisdom, because nothing less could produce any thing out of nothing; yet he hath created innumerable things of vastly different Natures and Properties, that by this infinite Diversity and Variety

riety of Beings, his infinite Power may be visible to those who are capable to perceive it. The Immenfity of his

Power appears in the Immenfity of the World, to which our very Imagination can prefix no Limits.

* The Circumference and Greatness of the Earth, with the vast Deep, doth astonish us when we have it in our view; but how little doth this Greatness appear, when we lift up our Eyes to the Heavens, and behold the innumerable multitude of those shining Globes, two or three of which,

viz. in the Planetary World, are only less than the Earth; and some of them, not only many Thousands, but Millions of times greater, as we are assured by the Authority and Observation of Mathematicians, and which, without them,

* By the lateft and exatleft Calculation of the Modern Mathematicians, there goes 69 Miles and a Tenth Part to a Degree; fo that the Periphery or Circumference of the Earth is 24876 English Miles. Its Diameter is 7915; and the whole Solidity may be reckon'd Two Hundred Fifty Nine Thousand Five Hundred Seventy and Eight Million, Nine Hundred Thirty Three Thousand, Four Hundred and Five Cubical Miles.

By the Theory of the Planets, it is known how much is nearer or farther diftant from the Sun; and their apparent Diameters being difcoverable by the Telescope, therafore Aftronomers, by comparing thust together, have adventured to determine their real Magnitudes, and the Proportion which they bear to one another. According to this method, Chriftianus Hugenius, the late famous Mathematician, gives the following Account of them, as may be feen both in his Book de Saturni Phenomenis, and in that de Terris Coelestibus, lib. I. p. 14.

The Diameter of the SUN is to the Diameter of	Saturn	87	5
	Jupiter	11	2
	Mars	166	1
	The Earth	111	1
	Venus	84	1
	Mercury	163	1
	or	290	1
	Juxta Hevelium.		

Wherefore the SUN is to	Saturn	50653	125
	Jupiter	1331	3
	Mars	4574296	1
	The Earth	1367631	1
	Venus	592704	1
	Mercury	4741632	1

Ptolemy	166	
Copernicus	162	
Tychobrahæ	140	
Longomontanus	196	times.
Keplerus	375	
Langstergius	434	
Wendelinus	162, 144	
Ant. Mar. de Reita	1000	

Ptolemy	49	
Copernicus	43	
Tychobrahæ	51	
Longomontanus	41	times.
Keplerus	52	
Langstergius	45	
Wendelinus	53	
Ant. Mar. de Reita	43	

The Magnitudes of the Fixed Stars cannot be computed; but there are Demonstrations offered to prove them greater than

than any of the Planets, seeing they shine so bright at a most stupendous Distance: For a Telescope which multiplieth 200 times, doth not shew them bigger than they appear to the naked Eye, but rather less. Whence it follows, That this Planetary Orb is but as a Point, in respect of the Distance of the Fixed Stars; and consequently, That the Universe, which comprehends the Planets and all the Stars, visible and invisible, each of which has a particular Orb, must be Immense beyond all Imagination and Apprehension.

them, we may rudely conjecture by their Appearance at so vast a Distance: By the help of Glasses, we may discern many

more Stars, than what appear to the naked Eye. And there be very good reason to believe, that there are many more which Glasses cannot reach; so that Imagination it self cannot grasp the Universe: And all our perceptive Faculties fail us, when we offer to view the Extension of it. Lo, all that we see, are but Parts of his Ways; for how little a Portion is heard of him, saith Job, chap. xxvi. 14.

VIII. How these Celestial Orbs are filled and furnished, we know not; but we have very good Reason to be-

See Christian.
Hugens, de Ter-
ris Celestibus,
4^{to} Hagæ Co-
mitis, 1698.

lieve, that they are not waste and desolate Places, or meer Masses of Matter to fill up the immense Space of Vacuity. Without doubt they are admirably replenish'd by his Almighty Wisdom, as well as this which is inhabited by us,

where are infinite Diversity of Instances, for forming and enlarging in us an Idea of the God-head, and to convince us that his Wisdom and Power cannot be bounded. In one Place Matter lies heaped in loose Particles as Sand which can be easily separated, nay, blown asunder: In another Place it is kneaded like Dough, we know not how, as in Clay and such like Ground: Again, it is both closely united, and also hardned wonderfully, as Stone, of which there are divers sorts, some of a bright and dazzling Lustre, as the Diamond and Crystal; other altogether Black, or of an unspotted White, or admirably variegated with different Colours, as the several sorts of Marble. Sometimes this hardned Matter is combustible, as Coal; sometimes malleable, as Metal, which may be beat so thin, that a very small Quantity of Gold could

could be made to cover the whole Surface of the Earth, as can be demonstrated from *Leaf-Gold*, and the drawing of *Gilded-Wire*; for a Grain Weight or two may be extended to some Thousand Ells of Length. Thus the Power of God doth wonderfully appear in the very Disposal of the *Atomes* and Particles of *Brute* and *Lifeless Matter*, which also sheweth his Wisdom no less; for by this means, Matter is made to serve to many different Uses and Purposes, which otherwise could only have served one or a few. Convenient Houses, strong and magnificent Buildings, could never have been erected of *Sand* and *loose Dust*, nor could *Stone* be beat out into useful Plough-Shares and Pruning-Hooks, Swords and Knives, and such other Instruments as the Conveniency of Life requires. Of what Advantage *Iron* is, we may understand by the imperfection of Arts in *America*, before the *Europeans* carried it thither: Tho' it be commonly reckoned the coursest of Metals, yet none is more useful, and without it other things could not be so well managed. It would be tedious to run over the several Species of *Brute Matter*, but it is evident, That the wonderful Variety thereof renders the State and Condition of Mankind more convenient and happy; and if but a few of them had been wanting, they must have laboured under great Inconveniencies: As for Instance, how inconvenient would it be for those who inhabit Inland Countries, remote from the Sea, if there were not Rocks and Mines of Salt; and therefore the Contrivance of such Variety, speaks out both the infinite Power and Wisdom of God.

Which doth yet more appear when we consider *Vegetables*, which is *Matter* raised to the *First Degree* of *Life*, being made capable of Nourishment and Growth. Some have written several large Volumes about the Number, Kinds, and Vertues of *Plants*, and many more might be written without exhausting the Subject. There are many different *Genders* or Kind of *Plants*, and every one of these in the same *Gender* differ from other as to Size,

E

Shape,

Shape, Figure, Colour, Odour, Vertue, Duration, and the like; so that the Number of known Plants are computed to be Eighteen or Twenty Thousand; and there may be yet many more undiscovered. Some are almost insensibly small, others vastly great; some proceed from the Seed, others by the Root; some bear Seed, others none at all; some send forth a Flower, others are without it; in some the Flower puts out first, in most others it is last; some have no Odour, others either refresh with their Fragrancy, or they offend with their Stink; some are only commendable for their Beauty and Ornament, as the Tulip, others, for their Use and Vertue; and some have Beauty and Vertue conjoined, as the Violet, the Rose, the Lily, and the Gilly Flower. Some wither almost as soon as they spring up, others last a Season; some are Annual, and others perpetual; and all these divers Kinds have one common Nourishment, viz. the *Rain* and *Dew* from Heaven. What Admiration may it breed, to consider that such an insipid thing as *Rain-Water*, is capable to be distilled into Liquors of so many different Colours, Tafts, Smells, and Vertues, as are the Juice of Plants! And it is no less Matter of Admiration, that this same liquid Rain should be consolidated into so firm, hard, and strong Parts, as are the Roots, Trunks, and Barks of Trees: For their Accretion and Growth is only from Rain, the Earth being only a fit Receptacle to preserve it for them, as is evident from divers Experiments. Is not all this the wonderful Work of God, of which who

See the *Anatomy of Vegetables*, by Dr. Grew.

can make any doubt? Especially if the inward Structure and admirable Mechanism of Plants and Vegetables be considered; for they are composed of different Parts, wisely fitted for Nourishment, Growth, and Preservation: The Root fixeth it in the Earth, sucks in Nourishment, and is as the Stomach in Animals, to digest and prepare it. Then there are various Fibres as Veins to receive the Sap, and thro' which it circulates. There are also some Vessels to take in Air for Respiration, to facilitate

facilitate the Circulation of the Sap. The outer and inner Bark of Trees preserve them from the Injury of the external Air: The leaves are not only for Beauty, but to defend the Fruit, and to Shade the Tree it self from excessive Heat, and to gather the Dew, which returning with the inward Sap, helps to nourish the Fruit and Branches. Every Vegetable has its peculiar Contrivance suited to its Nature and Use; which abundantly demonstrates that they are all the Effects of infinite Power and Wisdom: But there are some more remarkable Instances, which, like strange Prodigies, seem to be planted with a Design to force our Admiration and Acknowledgment. Take this short Account of them, which Mr Ray hath given in his ingenious and pious *Treatise of the Wisdom of God in the Creation*.

“ First, The Coco or Coker-nut-Tree, that supplies the *Indians* with almost whatever they stand in need of, as Bread, Water, Wine, Vinegar, Brandy, Milk, Oyl, Honey, Sugar, Needles, Thread, Linen, Cloths, Cups, Spoons, Belsoms, Baskets, Paper, Masts for Ships, Sails, Cordage, Nails, Coverings, for their Houses, &c. which may be seen at large in the many Printed Relations of Voyages and Travels to the *East-Indies*, but most faithfully in the *Hortus Malabaricus*, Published by that immortal Patron of natural Learning, *Henry Van Rheed van Drakenstein*, who has had great Commands, and employs in the *Dutch Colonies*.

“ Secondly, The *Aloe Muricata*, or *Aculeata*, which yields the *Americans* every thing their Necessities require, as Fences, Houses, Darts, Weapons, and other Arms, Shooes, Linen and Cloths, Needles and Thread, Wine and Honey, besides many Utensils, for all which *Hernandes*, *Garcilasso de la Vega* and *Margrave* may be consulted.

“ Thirdly, The *Bandura Cingalensium*, called by some *Priapus Vegetabilis*, at the end of whose Leaves hang long Sacks or Bags, containing pure limpid Water,

“ of great Use to the Natives, when they want Rain
 “ for Eight or Ten Months together.

“ *Fourthly*, The *Cinnamon-Tree* of Cylon, in whose
 “ Parts there is a wonderful Diversity. Out of the Root
 “ they get a sort of *Camphire*, and its Oil; out of the
 “ Bark of the Trunk the true Oil of Cinnamon; from
 “ the Leaves an Oil like that of Cloves, out of the
 “ Fruit a Juniper Oil, with a Mixture of those of Cin-
 “ namon and Cloves. Besides they boil the Berries
 “ into a sort of Wax, out of which they make Candles,
 “ Plaisters, Unguents. Here we may take Notice of the
 “ Candle-Trees of the *West-Indies*, out of whose Fruit
 “ boiled to a thick fat Consistence, are made very good
 “ Candles, many of which have been lately distributed
 “ by that most ingenious Merchant, Mr. *Charles Dubois*.

“ *Fifthly*, The Fountain or Dropping-Trees in the
 “ Isles of *Teno*, *St. Thomas*, and in *Guinea*, which serve
 “ the Inhabitants instead of Rain and fresh Springs.

“ *Sixthly*, and *Lastly*, we will only mention the Names
 “ of some other Vegetables, which with Eighteen or
 “ Twenty Thousand more of that Kind, do manifest to
 “ Mankind the Illustrious Bounty and Providence of the
 “ Almighty and Omniscient Creator towards his unde-
 “ serving Creatures, as the Cotton-Trees, the Manyoc
 “ or Cassava, the Potatoe, the Jesuits Bark-Tree, the
 “ Poppy, the Rhubarb, the Scammony, the Jalap,
 “ the Coloquintida, the China, Sarsa, the Serpentaria
 “ Virginia, or Snake-weed, the Nisi or Genseng, the nu-
 “ merous Balsam and Gum-Trees, many of which are
 “ of late much illustrated by the great Industry and Skill
 “ of that most discerning Botanist, Doctor *Leonard Pluke-*
 “ *ned*. Of what great Use all these, and innumerable
 “ other Plants are to Mankind, in the several Parts of
 “ Life, few or none can be ignorant. Besides, the
 “ known Uses in curing Diseases, in feeding and cloath-
 “ ing the Poor, in building and dying, in all Mechanicks,
 “ there may be as many more not yet discovered, and
 “ which may be reserved on purpose to exercise the
 “ Faculties,

“ Faculties bestowed on Man, to find out what is necessary.

X. But if we make one Step higher to view the *Animal Life*, we shall see Wisdom and Power still more wonderfully displayed and diversified. What a prodigious Bulk of Life and Animal Motion is the *Whale* ! What a huge Animal Machine is that *Leviathan* ! By whose *Neezings a Light doth shine, and whose Eyes are like the Eye-lids of the Morning*. Out of whose *Nostrils goeth Smoak as out of a Seething-pot or Cauldron*. He *maketh the Deep to boil like a Pot, the Sea like a Pot of Ointment*. He *maketh a Path to shine after him, so that one would think the Deep to be hoary*. And is not the Epitome of the Animal Life as astonishing which we have in the *Mite*, and others almost imperceptible Creatures ! Which tho’ they be but as *Motes* in the Sun, nay according to the Observation of some, there are some Animals less than a Grain of Sand by several Millions, yet they have Life and Motion, and consequently are inwardly composed of Heart, Lungs, Veins, Arteries, and Fibres, which proves the wonderful *Divisibility* of *Matter*, and the *Art* of Almighty Power, which can produce the same Motions and Sense in an *Atome* which we see in the biggest Animals. It is observed by some, That a *Whale* is a Mean proportional between one of those Animals that are seen in Pepper Water or in *Semine Masculino*, and the whole Earth ; So that a *Whale* bears the same proportion to one of these Animals, or contains them as often as the whole Earth does the *Whale*.

Again, we see here all imaginable Qualities distributed into Various Sizes, Shapes, and Figures ; and also, all or most of them united together into one. Some are designed to fly in the Air, and for that end are furnished with Feathers, Wings, and very strong Muscles, by which means they are capable to continue and support themselves a long time in the Air, without wearying : And because their Feathers may be spoiled by Rain and Dew, and so rendered useless ; therefore each Fowl has Two *Pots* of Oil, that is, Two *Glandules* upon its *Rump*, which always

produce an *Unctuous Substance*, for anointing the Feathers that they may not be wet, or receive any prejudice from Rain or the Moisture of the Air. Others are framed to swim in the Waters, and therefore have a peculiar Structure of their Lungs and inward Parts, which makes them require less Air than Terrestrial Animals. And tho' the Animals proper to one Element cannot live in another, for Fishes brought to the open Air pant and die; Land-Fowl, and the Generality of Terrestrial Creatures, when they fall into the Water, cannot subsist long without Drowning. Yet to shew that nothing is impossible to Almighty Wisdom, there be some Fishes framed to fly above Water, and a great many Fowl to swim and dive under it. So there are Terrestrial Quadrupedes, which, without Feathers, fly in the Air, as Bats, which may be called Flying-Mice, and some *Indian Squirrels*; and there be others, whose Food being Fish and Water-Insects, they range continually in the Waters, as the Beaver, the Otter, the Phoca or Sea-Calf, The Water-Rat, and Frog all which have their Toes interwoven with a thin Membrane to fit them for Swimming, and also are furnished with a *Wind-Bladder* to afford them what Air is necessary to the Circulation of the Blood, so that they can continue long in the Water without Suffocation. Now could all these different proper Structures of Animals have been contrived without Wisdom? Could they have been distinguished in some, and united and intermingled in others, according to the Elements for which they were designed without infinite Understanding?

To proceed, the Power of Seeing far is given to the Eagle and others, Swiftnes to the Hare, Hound, and Roebuck; Strength to the Ox and Bear; Fierceness to the Lion; Cunning to the Fox; Docility to the Dog; Courage and Fleetness to the Horse; and the Elephant is made both formidable and tame, cunning and docile, strong and fierce.

And lastly, there is Man to manage this and all the other Animals, who, tho' he be neither so clear sighted

as some, nor so strong, nor so fierce, nor so swift as others, yet by his Reason and the Ordinance of God, he has Dominion over the Fowls of the Air, the Beasts of the Field, and the Fish of the Sea, and maketh them all to do Homage unto him. *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! In Wisdom thou hast made them all, the Earth is full of thy Riches.*

XI. We need not ascend higher, nor go further to fetch Proofs of a Deity, nor Instances of eternal and infinite Wisdom and Power. They who are so peevish as to quarrel what they see here, would not lay aside this unreasonable Humour, tho' they were carried to the Regions above. And had discovered unto them all that is transacted there: for tho' there may be other Instances of Wisdom and Power in these Upper Parts of the Universe, yet there cannot be greater or more evident than those here below. So that they who are not convinced by these things which are continually before them, would not be satisfied with any thing which might be produced from Remoter places. As they are hardned against the ordinary Works of God, so they would resist obstinately such as are extraordinary, for they mock all of this kind which have been. Wherefore it is wisely observ'd, That God never wrought a Miracle to convince an Atheist; for besides that it is not reasonable that God should indulge an unreasonably wilful, and obstinate Humour, no Miracle can be more effectual, or less liable to Exception than the regular Motion of those prodigious Globes in the Heavens above, and the Multitude of Productions in the Earth below, all of which shew admirable Art and Contrivance. When common Food ceased to nourish, Delicacies and Dainties seldom do good. If the Body be clean and sound, common Food would be both savoury and nourishing. And if Men would lay aside their Pride, Malice, and Superfluity of Naughtiness; if they would be meek and docile, they should soon perceive the reasonable Force of what we have touched, to perswade to a Belief of the

Existence of God. And if any would have the Satisfaction of a fuller View of these Orbits of Wisdom and Power, I referr them to the forementioned *Treatise* of Mr. Ray, because it may be easily had, and is made plain and intelligible by the meanest Capacity.

ESSAY VII.

Of the Absurdity of Atheism.

I. **T**HERE are Two sorts of Demonstrations, one is a positive Proof draw from certain and known Principles; the other sheweth the absurd and unreasonable Consequences which would necessarily follow, if what is required be not granted, which is therefore called *Demonstratio ex absurdo*. Mathematicians make use of both: And there be many Propositions in *Euclid* which are not demonstrable but by the last Kind. Either of them makes a thing sure; and what is capable of both is most evident; and consequently nothing can be more absurd and unreasonable than to deny and resist what is clearly made out both these Ways. And hence also it follows, That the Atheist is monstrously obstinate, and to the utmost Degree absurd and unreasonable; seeing the Existence of a Deity can be demonstrated either way.

II. *First*, It is evident by what hath been delivered in the former Essays, that there are clear Instances of Wisdom and Power in the World; and it also clearly appears that this Wisdom and Power are united in one, because they never act separately, but always work together. Power is always directed by Wisdom, and what sheweth the one sheweth the other, which is a sufficient, full, and as great a Demonstration as can reasonably be demanded, of the Existence of a wise Pow-

er or powerful Wisdom, and consequently that there is a Being superiour to all that we see, which has as much Wisdom and Power as what we find expressed in the Contrivance and Frame of the World, and in the Composition of the several Beings that are in it, that is, there is and must be an all-wise and Almighty God ; for by him we understand a Being whose Power and Understanding is infinite. Of whose Existence we are also further assured by all the Principles of Reason and Knowledge, and by all those Methods by which we find out the Truth of any thing : For we are ascertained of the Truth of things, either by the Consideration of their Nature and abstracted Idea's, or by Deductions from Principles which all acknowledge to be self-evident, or by their effects and Manifestations, or finally by Testimony and Tradition. And all these several Ways, it is evident that there is such a supreme and perfect Being as is meant by God.

If one will be determined by the sentiments of others, there is the concurring Testimony of all Nations and People, of both Learned and Unlearned, a few only excepted ; which do not weaken the force of the Argument : For the Instances of some Bedlamites, or some that are born with only one Eye or one Foot, are as reasonable Objections against the common Use of Sense, Reason, two Eyes and two Legs. But if Authorities be little regarded, let the Cause of this general Belief of Mankind be enquired into, and 'twill presently appear that God does Exist. For what else could have suggested these Notions ? how could they have dream'd of an Invisible Being, with such Infinite Perfections, if that Being was not, if there were not some indelible Impressions of a Deity wrought into their Constitution, or some undeniable Manifestations without *Fear* and *Superstition* are effects of this Belief, but could never precede it. Let the Speculative Man contemplate his Idea's, and he must be convinced that there is a God, both by his Idea and the Idea of other things : By the first, because it includes necessary Existence ; by the other,

ther, because Existence is not necessary to their Nature. If Things which are not necessarily, must have a Cause, and a Cause sufficient for their Production; then every thing in Nature proves a God; for nothing besides himself, Exists necessarily; and therefore all those things which fall under our Sense or Reason proceeded from a Cause, that is both Wise and Powerful: for without Wisdom and Power they could not be produced. And there being a mutual Adaptation of all Things to one another, it is evident, That what produc'd one, produc'd all; For there is but one Universal Cause which is Omnipotent and Infinitely Wise. Thus the Existence of a Deity is demonstrable, by Arguments and Methods of all sorts that can be desired, Historical, Metaphysical, Natural, and Mathematical.

III. Moreover, this Truth is so far from being shaken by the Arguments and Objections of Atheists, that they do rather confirm it. Wherefore, that we may entirely silence them, and remove all Difficulties which any may entertain in this Matter, we will consider some of the chief of their Objections, without concealing or diminishing the Force of them.

First, It is objected, That an Argument, drawn from final Causes, the Ends and Uses of things, is not concluding, nor of Force enough to establish such an important Truth, because it has more of Fancy than Solidity in it: The ends of things are but little known, and are only devised by a strong Imagination. Fanciful Men apprehend a Thousand things which have no Foundation in Nature, as cunning and industrious Persons can adapt and appropriate things to several Uses to which they were never destined. It is reasonable to pretend that the several things in Nature have been particularly designed for the Ends and Uses to which the Art or Necessities of Mankind have employed them. And the like may be said of most other things, which we only fancy were formed with a Respect to such or such an End, because we perceive some Agreeableness betwixt them and it. This Argument Lucretius insists on, which
I shall

I shall set down according to the excellent Translation of Mr. Creech ;

*But now avoid their gross Mistakes, that teach
The Limbs were made for Work, a Use for each ;
The Eyes design'd to see, the Tongue to talk,
The Legs made strong, and knit to Feet, to walk ;
The Arms fram'd long, and firm, the Servile Hands
To work, as Health requires, as Life commands :
And so of all the rest whate'er they feign,
Whate'er they teach 'tis Nonsense all, and vain.
For proper Uses were design'd for none
But all the Members fram'd each made his own.*

Again :

*These various things Convenience did produce,
We thought them fit, and made them for our Use.
Thus these, and thus our Limbs and Senses too
Were form'd before that any Mind did know
What Office 'twas that they were fit to do.
Well then, 'tis fond to think that these began
For proper Uses made, bestow'd on Man.*

IV. The Summ of this Argument is, That all things happened by Chance, That nothing was contrived or made with Design, and that the pretended Ends and Uses of things are arbitrarily imposed by Men. But this Argument falls to pieces, and is of no Force at all, if it evidently appear that the Frame of the World, and the Structure of particular Beings cannot be ascribed to Chance, but to Contrivance and Design, which must necessarily infer an intelligent Being: For even the Proposers of this do acknowledge, That acting intentionally proves Wisdom and Understanding, otherwise they would not be so anxious to remove all Contrivance from Natural things.

Now,

Now, neither the Continuation of the present State of things, nor their first Production can be ascribed to Chance without the grossest Impudence. Not the first, because Chance is Chance still, and not only may, but doth more often miss than hit right; whereas the Motions of the Planets are certain and regular; and the successive Production of Animals and Vegetables is constant and unchangeable, never miscarrying, but when some visible impediment happens. The several Species are not confounded or blended together, but every thing produceth its like of the same kind, with all its natural Perfections and Proportions. If one should always throw the same Number with Two Dyes, when the Odds is more than one to a Million, tho' there be but Six different Numbers on each, we would conclude that he did it not by Chance but by some Art or Trick which secured it. How improbable then, nay, how impossible is it, that so many Thousand admirable and regular Productions should happen meerly by Chance, when each is a greater Chance than one against many Thousands of Millions without the Management of a Wise Power. We conclude him a wise and expert Artist, who always hits his Mark, and compasseth his Design. And is there not as much Reason, to conclude these many natural Productions the Effects of an Intelligent Being?

If it be replied, that all things now are continued and perpetuated by the Order and Method into which Matter has settled, and into which it fell by mere Chance; I answer, That neither can the first Production of things, or that Order and Law by which they are now produced be ascribed to Chance, which was the other thing I asserted. For supposing Matter to be Eternal, we must also suppose some other thing to put it into Motion, for Motion is not essential to Matter: And tho' we should suppose, that both Matter and Motion were Eternal, yet we cannot thence conclude, that blind Matter and undetermined Motion could ever produce any regular thing, without a Director, or one to super-intend it.

At

At the most it can be supposed only to occasion a Separation of its Parts, and a Secretion of the subtiler from the grosser Particles, as we see done by some Chymical Operations; but no Force put upon our Imagination can ever make us fancy that it could be so admirably organized of it self, or by mere Chance shap'd into so many different independent Species of Beings, which have also Power to perpetuate their Kind, not to speak now of the Faculties of thinking and reasoning. We may with much more Ease conceive, that a Fortuitous Jumble of Letters may compose all the Books of the World, which the Atheists have been often, and of old twisted with.

And as Reasoning *a priori*, we cannot admit Chance to be the Cause of things, so *a posteriori*, we cannot deny Contrivance and Design to be visible in the Frame of the World, the Order of Beings, and the particular Structure of each, unless we do Violence to both Sense and Reason. Such as refuse to acknowledge it, I would have them to declare greater Signs and Evidence of Art, Design, and Contrivance, than what is to be seen in and amongst natural things. Are not all things made in *Number*, *Weight*, and *Measure*? Where do they perceive any Confusion or Disorder? Where do they see irregular and unsuitable Mixtures or Compositions? Are there disproportionable Quantities of Matter, or disagreeable Qualities conjoined in any Subject? Is not Order, Method, just Proportion and Measure to be observed every where, and in every thing? Are not all things so exactly adapted together, and so well fitted to each other, that whether we consider Individuals, or the several Species, or the whole Frame together, nothing can be better devised? What is it to act intentionally, or with Design, but to purpose some certain end, and to carry it on by suitable Means? And therefore when we see things so conveniently adapted together as to produce certain Effects, and so well adjusted as to prevent the Miscarriage of them, have we not all Reason to conclude,

clude, that there is Design and Contrivance there? The more excellent the Effects be, and the more Artificial the Means, it still proves more Wisdom in the Author and Contriver, and consequently the Author of Natural things is infinitely more wise than Men, because Natural Productions do far exceed those of Humane Art, and the Means by which they are produced are much more admirable.

It is great Perverseness and inexcusable Obstinacy, not to acknowledge a wise Contrivance in the Ends and Uses of Natural things, or to alledge that they are all devised by Men: For tho' we should grant, that the Ends and Uses to which the Wit, Art, and Industry of Man has improved many of them, were not foreseen by their wise Author, nor those things which they have thus improved, intended by him purposely for the greater conveniency and advantage of Life; yet there are real and visible Ends and Uses, and manifest admirable Contrivances in order to the same, which are altogether independent upon either the Art or imagination of Men. Is the Distinction of Animals into Male and Female, and the Adaptation of the Female to conceive and nourish the *Fetus*, both while it is in the Womb and after it is brought forth, merely grounded upon Fancy? Could either Individuals have been multiplied, or the Kinds propagated without this? And was not this an admirable Contrivance, and could it have been without Wisdom and Understanding? What Reason is there to ascribe a Watch to Art and Contrivance more than the Structure of Animals, which is composed of different Parts and Vessels, curiously set together? Why should we think that Windows were designed to let in Light to the House, and not the Eye purposely framed to see? Why should we think, Doors and Gates intended by the Architect for giving Entry to what we would admit into the House, and shutting out other things, and not also conclude the *Valves* of the Heart, Veins, and Arteries such another Contrivance? Is there more Art in
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the various ways of joining the different pieces of any Frame or Machine, than there is in the different joinings of the Bones of the Body, which makes them move differently and very usefully? As for Example; The upper part of the Bone of the Arm is convex, and that Bone of the Shoulder which receives it is concave, by which Means we can turn our Arm round, whereas at the Elbow there is another Kind of Articulation, which only suffers that part of the Arm to turn upwards towards the Shoulder. And because neither of these joinings were proper for the divers Motions of the Hand and Fore-Arm, therefore its Bones are joined so as to make it capable of turning round, and of moving backwards and forwards, up and down, and almost every way. The Teeth are the only Bones of the Body, except those of the Ear, which are not covered with a most sensible Membrane; And if they had been covered with it, we had been liable to continual Pain. Now this Difference between the Teeth and the rest of the Bones could not be Chance, but a Wise Contrivance. I might also make out this further, by considering the different Contrivance betwixt the Teeth of Men and other Animals, and those of other Animals according to their different Natures and by many other Instances. But what hath been said is sufficient to prove, That the Ends and Uses of natural things are real and not fancied by Men; that the Universal Frame and the Nature of particular things do evidently and demonstrably prove a Wise Contrivance; and consequently that all things are the Effects of a wise and intelligent Agent. And who would be further cleared and perswaded of this Matter, let them read the Treatise which the Honoured and Worthy Master Boyle has written of Final Causes.

V. But 2dly, 'tis objected, *That if it be reasonable to conclude the Existence of a Deity, or some supreme and intelligent powerful Being from the seeming Order and Contrivance of some things, it is as reasonable to conclude that there is no such being from the manifest Irregularity and Uselessness*

ness of other things, for if there was a God, or any Wise Almighty Being, as is pretended, all his Works would bear Prints of his Wisdom. But we see many things which have no manner of Contrivance in them, which are of no Use, but rather prejudicial, and therefore we have Reason to believe, that the rest happened by Chance and not by Design. Thus (say they) the Spleen is the Occasion of much Pain and Trouble, and is of it self of no Use, for several Animals have been known to live without it. Mountains are irregular and ill contrived Heaps, which spoil the Surface of the Earth, and render it less beautiful, and are very inconvenient for Traveling and Commerce. If this Terraqueous Globe had been the Work of a wise Agent, there would not have been more Water than dry Land, which is the only proper Habitation for Man and Terrestrial Animals, which are by much preferable to Fishes: Nor would there have been so much Ground laid waste which cannot be inhabited, as the Deserts of Arabia, the Libyan Sands, and about the Two Poles, &c.

VI. To all this I answer First, That tho' it should be granted that there are many things without Contrivance, and which show no Design, yet it would be unreasonable to deny the necessary Consequences of what doth manifestly show both a Contrivance and Design; and therefore whether there be more or fewer Instances which do so, it still follows that there is a Wise, Intelligent Being, capable to produce them. 2^{dly}, We cannot without Rashness conclude, That a thing is without Contrivance, because we cannot find it out, nor is intended for any use, because we cannot perceive it. Our Knowledge is very much limited, and it is impossible for us to comprehend all that God doth, and it is great Presumption to condemn what we do not understand. No wise Man will slight the Works of any famous Mechanick or Artiff, tho' he doth not presently conceive what he intended by it; for his known Art and Skill in other things makes it reasonable to believe, that what is not yet declared or understood was nevertheless well designed and artificially contrived: Even so, seeing the general Frame of the

the World doth show so much Wisdom, and that there appears so much Art and Contrivance in the Nature and Structure of particular Beings, we ought from hence to conclude, that all things are wisely and well contrived for excellent Ends and purposes, tho' we be ignorant of many of them. 3^{dly}, In passing a Censure and Judgment upon particular things, we ought not to consider them separately only, but also with a Respect to other things, to which they have a Relation, and with which they are conjoined.

Having premised these things in general, I answer next to these particular Instances proposed. *First*, That tho' the Use of the Spleen is not yet well known, nor can it be certainly determined, nevertheless we have no Reason to think it useless, seeing the Structure of it is as curious as that of the Liver, Lungs and other Parts: The Use and Function of several other Vessels were not known till of late, and after Ages may discover the Use of this too, which certainly was never placed in the Body without some special End or Use; nor must it be reckoned altogether useless, because some Animals have been found to live without it: For so, both Men and other Animals do live without some Parts, which are of a known Use and of a special Contrivance; besides, tho' the Loss of the Spleen did not instantly put an end to Life, it might have shortned it, or rendred it painful and uneasy, marring the Oeconomy of the Body.

2. As to the Mountains, they are very far from being useless; for they serve to collect and condense the Vapours which feedeth Springs and Fountains;

They determine the Winds in some measure: They nourish divers Plants, which will not grow upon the Valleys: They are proper for Metals and Minerals, and are so far from spoiling the Beauty of the Earth, that they make it much more pleasant, by casting it into divers Shapes and Figures:

See Mr. Keile's
Examination of
Dr. Burnet's
Theory, ch. 3.

3. As to the Proportion betwixt the Sea and dry Land, it is diversly stated, some making the dry Land greater, others less. But generally they are computed equal; nay, I do acknowledge that it doth seem by Geographical Tables, and the Discoveries of Navigation, that the Sea has a larger superficies than the dry Land. But however, there is as much dry Land as is necessary either for Man or Terrestrial Animals, nay, as much as could contain many Millions more than there are, so that there is no Reason to complain of being straitened by want of Room. And it was necessary that there should be more Sea than dry Land.

That the Sea should be both *great* and *wide*, because there are in it *things creeping innumerable, both small and great Beasts*. The number of both Species and Individuals of Marine Creatures does far exceed all other Animals. Besides the Sea is the Source both of Rain, and of all Rivers, some of which are prodigiously great and long. Rivers are a great Advantage, the Countries which are well watered by them, are preferred to others and much more convenient for Habitation. What Inconvenience and Prejudice then would it have been to Mankind either to have stop'd the Source of so great a benefit, or to have lessened it so as that it could not give necessary Supplies. Moreover the Ground requires all the Rain which falleth, and if there had been more dry Land, more Rain had been also requisite: and yet there would have been less than at present, for the Quantity of Vapours which are raised bear a proportion to the Surface from whence they are raised as well as to the Heat which raised them. Now seeing a Surface equal to the present dry Land, sendeth forth but just such a Quantity of Vapours as is sufficient for Rain and Rivers therefore if the Surface of the Sea had been contracted, and that of the dry Land enlarged, there would have been a great want of Water, few Countries would have been better than Libya and *Arabia Petria*, (as any may be further

Ibid. ch. 5.

p. 92, 93.

further satisfied in, by the Book quoted in the Margin.) In the former Edition, 'twas printed that the *Rain in one Year was five times the Quantity of Water in the Sea*, which was a great mistake. It should have been the Quantity of Vapours which arise from the Sea in so long time. I did not advance this curious Observation of my own head, and at present I do not remember the manner how 'twas calculated, nor have I the Book from whence I drew it. But whatever be in this, any may be easily satisfied that the present largeness of the Ocean was wisely contrived, for giving spacious Room to the Innumerable Multitudes of Creatures which live in it, for the greater Conveniency of Navigation, and for affording fresh and speedy Supplies to Water the dry Land by Rain and Rivers.

4. The *Libyan Sands*, and barren Desarts of *Arabia*, &c. cast no Reflection upon the wise Contrivance of the Earth, for it is not reasonable to think that all Parts should be alike good and excellent; Diversity is both useful and pleasant: What is wanting in these barren Places is supplied by the Richness of others, which are also rendred more delightful by the Contemplation of such frightful Desolateness, even as Shadows contribute to the Beauty of a Picture, and the Brightness of the other Colours. Besides other Uses which we yet know not, they may be designed also to make us sensible how much we owe to the Bounty of the wise Author of all things, who hath made so much of the Earth a convenient Habitation for the Children of Men. *Lastly*, The same may be said in Reference to the Countries about the two Poles, which are not very considerable, if we compare them with the rest of the habitable World. And besides, they show the wise Contrivance of the Spheroidical Figure of the Earth, and of making the Axis so much shorter than the Diameter of the *Æquator*; for if it had been otherwise the frigid Zones should have been much more large, and much less habitable. There is no way to Remedy that Inconvenience of the Country

about the Poles, at least in our Conception, except there were Two Suns, or that this Sun was made to move without and beyond the Tropicks, neither of which would be so convenient as the present Contrivance.

7. 3dly, It is said, *That the World and all things in it were eternal; which if true (in their Opinion) will cut off all Pretext of Contrivance and Design: For if nothing was ever made, then nothing also was ever contrived, there being no Occasion for contriving what was already existent.*

8. But this is a precarious Assertion, which being denied can never be proved. The Opinion of the Eternity of the World was indeed maintained by divers of the Ancient Philosophers: but their Arguments are far from concluding, nay they scarce amount to a probability, for they run upon their uncertain Notions of the Nature of things, the Supposition of an Universal Fate and Necessity, and the difficulty of giving a Reason why the World should not have existed sooner than any time assigned to its Beginning: for if there was the same Reason for its Existence from all Eternity, as for its later or temporary Production, then we must hold, say they, that it did Exist from all Eternity, but these Reasonings are very weak and easily defeated by the Evidence and Demonstration of a first Cause which is wise and also free, having the absolute Power of its own Actions, doing as and when it pleaseth himself. 2. This Opinion of the Worlds Eternity, contradicts the more Universal Tradition of Mankind, which hath always attested that the World had a Beginning. 3. It is against the current Testimony of all History, which traceth the Origin of Nations and People, the Inventions of Arts and Sciences, and which sheweth that all have happened within the Space of less than Six Thousand Years, according to the most probable, (if not certain) Calculation, which could not be if the World and Man had been Eternal. Therefore *Lucretius* reasoneth very well in his Fifth Book.

But grant the World Eternal, grant it knew
 No Infancy, and grant it never New,
 Why then no Wars, our Poets Songs employ
 Beyond the Siege of Thebes, or that of Troy?
 Why former Heroes sell without a Name?
 Why not their Battles told by lasting Fame?
 But 'tis as I declare; and thoughtful Man
 Not long ago and all the World began:
 And therefore Arts that lay but rude before
 Are publish'd now, we now Increase the Store.
 We perfect all the Old and find out more.
 Shippings improv'd, we add New Oars and Wings,
 And Musick now is found and speaking Strings.
 These Truths, this Rise of things we lately know.

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4thly, Tho' we may fanſie that theſe greater and permanent Bodies of the Planets and Stars may have been Eternal, becauſe they have laſted ſo many Thouſand Years without any viſible Change, as is acknowledged by all, yet we cannot bring our Imagination to conceive the Eternity of ſucceſſive Beings poſſible, for a great many Contradiſtions and Abſurdities do follow it. As the inequality of Infinities, which the ſubtileſt Metaphyſicians as well as Vulgar Minds have hitherto judged inconfiſtent. If the World has been Eternal, there has paſſed already an Infinite Number of Years, and alſo an Infinite Number of Days; both which are dayly and yearly encreaſing. So there may be an Addition to what is Infinite which deſtroys the common Notion of the Thing: and alſo 'twill follow from hence, that two Numbers may be equal and yet differ exceedingly; for the number of Days are greater than the Number of Years, and yet they are equal becauſe both Infinite. For which Reaſon the Attribute of Infinity ſeems Incompatible with all Quantity, Numerical or other.

But further we can eaſily conceive a Succeſſion which ſhall never end but continue to all Eternity. But it is

impossible to conceive a chain of natural Dependencies without a Beginning. To clear this, if God shall please that the World continue for ever, there is no difficulty in believing and conceiving that Mankind and other Animals may be perpetuated, even after the common Method to all Eternity: But that the present Order and Method of their Generation and Production was from all Eternity, is above the reach either of Reason or Imagination. Wherefore we must of Necessity acknowledge the Production of some one or more (from whom the rest have descended) in a manner different from the present: And there is no account of the first Production of Mankind so reasonable or so probable, not to say now certain, as that which declares the immediate Creation of one Man and one Woman by the Hand of God. The like may be said of all other successive Beings. But *scilicet* and *Lastly*, Tho' We should force our selves to grant the Eternity of the World and all particular Beings, yet it could not be reasonably inferred from thence that there is no God; for they, who desire this large Concession, must grant to us too, which cannot possibly be denied, that there have been from all Eternity Instances of great Power and Wisdom, from which it necessarily follows, that there is an Eternal, Wise, and Mighty Being; for Power and Wisdom must proceed from something that is wise and powerful. Therefore the Old Philosophers, who did hold the Eternity of the World, did believe it a necessary Emanation from the Being of God, and thought not that it did, or could subsist without him.

Thus *Proclus* the Platonist, and *Averrhoes* have maintained the Eternity of the World, the one by Twenty and the other by Twelve Arguments, but they are for the most Part drawn from the Nature of God according to their Conceptions of him. If the Reader desire a farther Account of the Sentiments of the Ancient Philosophers in this Matter, I referr him to Dr. *Cudworth's Intellectual System*.

9. It is 4thly, Objected against the Being of a God, That if it was, it would render the Being of other things impossible; for if he was, he would be infinite, and if infinite there could be no Room for the Existence of other things. But this Argument proceeds upon a mistaken Notion of the Infinite Nature of God, as if he was some gross Material Substance vastly extended, whereas he is a Spirit, that is, a Substance altogether different from Matter or Body, who hath not the Properties of it; and consequently, we cannot draw just or true Conclusions about him from what is observable in them. God's Infinity is not infinite Extension; and tho' his Omnipresence hath some Resemblance to it, yet the Spirituality of his Nature makes his Ubiquity and Omnipresence in no wise incompatible with the Existence of Material Beings or Corporeal Substances: Nay, they are only sustained by the Infinity of his Essence; and therefore the Existence of so many finite things, which have no Self-Sufficiency to exist of themselves, doth evidently demonstrate the Existence of an Infinite Essence as the Cause and Upholder of them.

It would be tedious to consider all the little Cavils and Objections of Atheists against a Deity. The most material are reducible to those we have now proposed, and may be refuted by the Answers which we have now given; for they proceed either from wrong Apprehensions of the Nature and Attributes of God, or from Ignorance of the Nature and Relation of other things, or from an obstinate Resistance of what is *de facto* evident; and all of them demonstrate their Unreasonableness and Absurdity, which doth lead me to the second way of Demonstrating a Deity.

10. Mathematicians, as was observed in the Beginning of this Essay, demonstrate many things *ex absurdo*; that is, they prove that such and such a thing must be because many absurd and unreasonable Consequences would follow if 'twas otherwise. And by the same Method of reasoning which is very just, the Existence of a

Deity, or first Supreme, Wise Omnipotent Cause may be demonstrated. For, if there be no God, then it necessarily follows, That either every thing made it self, or that all things came from nothing, and that there are Effects which have no Cause; for there is Life, Sense, and Reason, without any being capable to produce them: And there are artificial Contrivances, regular Proceedings, and wise Adaptation of things to Ends and Purposes far above the Power and Capacity of any thing which is existent. These and many such things follow the Denial of a God, which are not only great Difficulties, but such gross and senseless Absurdities as no thinking Person can either swallow or digest.

I had rather believe (said the Great Lord Verulam) all the Fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and all the Alcoran, than that this Universal Frame is without a Mind, [Essay XVI.] It is common with Atheists to mock others for believing but they are themselves most guilty of a monstrous Credulity: For their Belief Contradicts Experience, the common Sentiments of Mankind, and all Evidence and Demonstration. Which Faith is wisest and most ridiculous? that which says all things were of nothing, or that which assigns a sufficient Cause for their Production? that which makes Effects surmount their Cause? or that which holds a Cause abundantly capable?

As therefore Deformity sheweth Shape and Proportion beautiful, so the Belief of a Deity appears more reasonable, by the Absurdity and Unreasonableness of Atheism, which contradicts common Sense, overturns the agreed Principles of Knowledge and Reason, confounds Chance and Contrivance, Accident and Design, and which has its Recourse to wild, romantick, and most precarious Hypotheses; for they cannot shun the owning an Infinity, and the Existence of something from Eternity; and they are forced to acknowledge that things are framed according to the Rules of Art and Proportion. Now is it not more reasonable to ascribe
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the constant Observance of these Rules to an Intelligent Being, than to Chance or no Cause? For there is no middle thing betwixt them to be fixed on; either the one or the other must take place. *Nature*, which they talk so much of, is an *Obscure Word* for concealing their Thoughts and Sentiments: If by this they mean something distinct from *Matter*, which moves and directs it, their *Nature* is God in Disguise; and if they must flee to this for a rational Account of the Production of things, why do they quarrel at the Word [God] which carries a clearer *Idea*, and in the Sense of which all the World is agreed. Tho' this *Nature* of theirs be equivalent, yet it is more mysterious, and therefore it smells of some designed Perverseness, as if by the Use of this Word and the Disuse of the other, they would turn Peoples Thoughts from God, and God from the Honour of being the Creator of all things. This was evidently the design of *Spinoza*, for sometimes he supposes God and *Nature* the same, and at other times he Represents *Nature* as a Necessary Determined Concatenation of things, that so his Atheistical Principles may steal upon men insensibly.

But if by *Nature* they only understand *certain Laws*, and I know not what *Ordinances*, by which things must move; is this sufficient to explain the first Production of things? It is strange how fond some are of Mechanical Explications of the Works of Infinite and Omnipotent Wisdom: they search them with all earnestness, and are daily baffled in the undertaking: The boldest Pretenders are guilty of such Oversights and Blunders, as Children and those of the meanest Capacity could hardly be suspected of. Which certainly is a Judgment from God, who makes the wisest foolish when they do not seek his Glory, but rather study to take from the Honour of his Glorious Works. Let Philosophers set their Imaginations a work, let them dream and think as much as they please, and lay down what Hypotheses they will, they shall never be able to give a satisfactory

Account.

Account of neither many daily Productions, nor yet of the first Production of all things, by meer Natural or Mechanical Causes. For tho' it should be true that Matter cannot move but according to these Laws and that moving by them in process of Time, the Work could have been produced as it is at present, after that *Romantick Manner of Cartesius*; yet there was no Necessity that Matter should move at all, nor could it move of it self. Matter of it self is meerly passive, it is capable of Motion, but Motion is not essential to it, otherwise it would be destroyed when at rest. Wherefore whether they will or nor, they must own the Existence of something prior to Matter it self, or the Motion of it, which *Cartesius* was sensible of, and therefore he could not build his airy and fanciful *System*, without supposing the Existence of a Deity. And if he had kept his Eye upon this infinitely perfect Being, and considered the World and all particular things as his Work; if instead of a vain curious Enquiry how things should have been, if Matter once moved had been left to it self, he had shewed how things are, and explained the admirable Contrivance of them, if he had given us an History of Nature, and described the Wisdom of God in the Make, Order, Place, and Relation of particular things; I say, If *Cartesius* had done this, as he seems to have been able for it, the World would have been more obliged to him, his Philosophy should have been more rational and satisfactory; more useful to others, and of more lasting Fame to himself; Whereas now by turning his Thoughts from the Ends and Uses of things, and the Wisdom of the Author and Contriver, he has turned his Back upon the only true Light that was to have guided him; he has groped in the Dark and produced nothing but useless Conjectures and the extravagant Ravings of the Brain, which tickled Men at first, as all Novelties use to do, but which wise, inquisitive, and thinking Men will, and must disgust, because there wants Solidity.

To return, Supposing Pre-existent Matter and Motion, and that all things were produc'd by the Rules of Mechanism, yet this could not excuse the Disbelief of a God; for it is an indubitable Argument that the Production of all things was under the Management of Infinite Wisdom, which knew all the Ways and Methods of doing things; and which resolv'd to give manifest Instances of each. Working by various and diverse Methods is the highest Evidence both of large Skill and also of Liberty or free Agency: and there is such wonderful Diversity in carrying on the same ends that there must be a frated and obstinate Aversion to the Belief of a God, where this is resisted or so much as suspected of being transacted blindly and ignorantly. [See hereafter, Part II. Essay II. N. 6. and Essay III.]

How deaf must he be who is not sensible of loud and distinct Sounds which encompass him? how blind who does not perceive plain and clear Evidence? and how perverse must the Atheist be, who will

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not acknowledge God, who is manifested to all his senses and to all his faculties both Internal and External. It is true, the Essence of God is Invisible, but the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made even his Eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. There is no Excuse, there can be no Pretext for Atheism. It is wilful Ignorance, the Height of Folly, wicked and unreasonable Obstinacy. *He is a Fool who saith in his Heart that there is no God,* and he is a Pernicious Fool who glories in these ridiculous Sentiments, which if admitted would overturn the surest Foundation of private Peace and Comfort, and loosen the strongest Bonds of Humane Society. He had more Natural Parts and acquired Knowledge, and knew more of the History of Nature than any can pretend to, who made the Fear of God to be the Beginning or chief Part of Wisdom.

As God is the first Cause and Author of all things, so the Belief of a Deity is the Foundation of all solid Reason; what is not built on this is Nonfence and Absurdity. I know the Atheists arrogate to themselves Wit, and Judgment, and Knowledge above others, and do think that it is the Ignorance and Credulity of the Bulk of Mankind (as one lately Words it) which make them to be of another Belief. But I pray you, must they carry away Sense and Understanding from others, because they are so vain as to think it? Do not those in *Bedlam* think themselves wiser than others? All the rest of the World are Fools in their Eyes, and those who keep them there, not only Fools but Oppressors and most unjust. And yet Atheism is a more extravagant and pernicious Madness which it is the Interest of Mankind to keep from spreading. But alas it has been suffered to take Root and spread, nay it is cherished and encouraged. Men walk the Streets and publickly act this Madness. In every Corner they throw their Squibs of Scoffs and Drollery against the Almighty Author of their Being. They meet in Companies to concert how they may most wittily expose him, and what is the readiest way to render him ridiculous in the Eyes of others: A Clinch, or Jest, or puny Witticism is received and entertained as an useful Discovery, and carried about with all Diligence. Tho' there be no Reason why the Atheist should be a Zealot, there being no Obligation on him to propagate his Opinions; and because the less they are entertained by others he is the more secure; yet no Self is become more zealous of late than Atheists, and their Fraternity, who maintain their Cause by an affronted Impudence, by the Exercise of a froathy Wit more than Reason, and by Jestings and Drollery rather than serious Argument. And is this a reasonable or commendable way of handling a Matter so serious and important? Should Impudence run down Evidence? Should a Jest or a Witticism be of more Weight than the Dictates of common Sense and sober Reason?

Reason? If these Men were capable of Counsel; I would ask them whether they are absolutely sure that they are in the right? Are they able to demonstrate that there is no God? This is more than any ever yet pretended to; and if they cannot pretend to this, ought they not to walk very cautiously, If there be a God, as there may, for any Assurance they have to the contrary, what then have they to expect for those bold Insults and that wicked Opposition to him? A modest Enquiry into Truth, even into the Existence of God himself, is reasonable, and cannot offend either God or Man: But Spite and Insolency cannot by any Means be justified. It shews a Desire that there should be no God, more than Doubts and Scruples about his Existence which must needs provoke the most high God, and draw down his Judgments, both on those who are guilty, and on the Land which cherisheth them.

The CONCLUSION.

THough the Existence of God be most evident, yet I thought myself obliged to insist the longer upon proving it, because it is of such Importance; for it is the Foundation of all Knowledge and Certainty as well as of all Morality and Religion. The Belief of a Deity is the first Article of the Christian Creed, upon which the Truth and Certainty of the rest depend: And therefore, 'twas necessary to shew that this is no vain Hypothesis, or Imaginary Supposition; but a Truth loudly proclaimed, and strongly confirmed not only by Reason, but every Part of the World. So that whatever the Atheist may arrogate to himself, and whatever Esteem may be paid to him narrowly in this corrupt Age, yet he is so far from being wiser than others, that by the universal Voice of Nature as well as Scripture, he will be declared a Fool who saith that there is no God.

When I have proved that this God doth rule the World, which is also included in this first Faith, I shall then consider what it is to live by it, and shall shew how necessary it is to the being just and righteous. And I hope that there is such Satisfaction given in these Essays, that who ever shall read them will be desirous of the other that are promised.

FINIS

A N
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
Nature, Necessity, and Evidence
O F
Christian Faith,
In Several
ESSAYS.

PART II.
Of Faith, with respect to Divine Providence.

By JOHN COCKBURN, D. D.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *William Keblewhite*, at the Swan in
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EXHIBIT

THE NATIONAL

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The CONTENTS of the Second Part.

- I** *Introduction, shewing the Force of Prejudice, how Unreasonable it is, and that Unbelief is both a Misfortune and Crime,* p. 1
- Essay I.** *Providence prov'd from the Nature of God,* p. 6
1. *God is Omnipotent,* ibid.
 2. *Infinitely Wise,* ibid.
 3. *Eternal and Immutabile,* p. 7
 4. *Infinite in Essence and Perfection, and therefore Omnipresent,* ibid.
 5. *That God doth actually know every thing that is, how easily conceived,* p. 8
 6. *At the Creation there must have been an Intuitive View of all things at once, and the same still necessary,* p. 9
 7. *Whence a Providence concluded,* p. 10
 8. *God Infinitely Good,* p. 11
 9. *And Just,* p. 13
 10. *He is an Active Being, whose Perfections and Attributes are always employ'd,* p. 14
 11. *The Glory of God, and the Good of the Creatures, promoted by Providence, and therefore it must be,* p. 15
 12. *A Summary of all that hath been said,* p. 16
- Essay II.** *Providence prov'd from the Nature of all Created Things,* p. 17
1. *Finite Things could not continue in being, without a Divine Influence and Concurrence,* ibid.
 2. *Every thing proves a particular Providence, because their Existence depends upon the Will of God,* p. 19
 3. *The Scripture ascribes the Preservation of every thing to God. How much its Authority is to be rely'd on,* ibid.
 4. *By what means Life is preserv'd; and what is meant by Daily Bread, in the Lord's Prayer,* p. 21
 5. *Of Natural and Secondary Causes,* p. 22
 6. *The different Duration of the several Species of Beings, and of every Individual, is only from the Arbitrary Will of God,* p. 24
 7. *The Order and Harmony of the Parts of the World could not continue without a particular Providence,* p. 26
- Essay III.** *Providence prov'd from the Arbitrary Effects in the Material World,* p. 30
1. *Weather and Seasons variable every where,* p. 31
 2. *This cannot proceed from Natural or Mechanical Causes,* p. 33
 3. *St. Paul proves a Providence from this, and the Scripture every where insists upon it,* p. 34
 4. *The Summ of all that hath been said on this Head,* p. 37
 5. *An Objection Proposed and Answer'd,* p. 38
 6. *A Digression concerning the*
- A 2 Blind-

The Contents of the Second Part.

- Blindness and Unreasonableness of Philosophers, who mind Second Causes more than the First,* p. 41
7. *Prodigies prove a Providence,* p. 46
- Essay IV. *Of the Manifestation of Providence in the Intellectual World, particularly amongst Mankind.* p. 48
1. *Clear Proofs of Providence may be expected from the Intellectual World,* ibid.
2. *Of the Immensity, or vast Extent of the Intellectual World,* p. 49
3. *There is in the Intellectual, as well as the Material World, a Harmony, Dependence, &c.* p. 53
4. *But a clear and full Knowledge of this, not to be hop'd for in this Life,* p. 55
5. *Proofs of Providence from Mankind; and, first, of the admirable Adaptation of the World to Man, and the wise Ordering, Labour and Industry to be necessary for obtaining the things of this Life,* p. 56
6. *Of Man's Authority over other Animals,* p. 62
7. *Of the Divine Care, in proportioning the Number of both Sexes to each other,* p. 64
8. *Of the adjusting Deaths to Births,* p. 66
9. *Of the Marks of Distinction proper to each Sex, and every individual Person,* p. 67
10. *An Objection against this, propos'd,* p. 69
- An Answer to it,* p. 70
11. *Of the Diversity of Hand-writings,* p. 71
12. *Of the wonderful Diversity of Men's Genius's and Inclinations,* p. 72
- It proceeds not from the Temperament of the Body,* p. 75
- Nor is it deriv'd from Parents, or acquired by Education,* ibid.
- It is from God,* p. 76
- It proves a Providence,* p. 77
- Of the arbitrary effusion of these Natural Gifts, as to Time and Place,* p. 79
13. *Of the Genius for Projects and Designs,* p. 82
14. *Providence proved by useful Inventions,* p. 83
15. *By keeping up the due Value of Money, contrary to the Designs & Practices of Men,* p. 87
16. *By the Publick Order and Government of the World,* p. 91
17. *By the Institution of Marriage,* p. 94
18. *By the Distinction of Nations and Kingdoms,* p. 95
19. *By the Division of Languages,* p. 97
20. *By Inspiring the Generality with a particular Affection to their Nation and Country,* p. 100
21. *By keeping up the Authority of Kings, and disposing People to Obey,* p. 101
22. *By the Detection of Secret Crimes,* p. 106
- Of Murther, and its wonderful Discovery,* p. 108
23. *A general View of the foregoing Arguments,* p. 110

The Contents of the Second Part.

24. *A Summary Proposal of of blind Chance,* p. 136
many more, p. 111 *Why a good Cause doth not some-*
times succeed, p. 137
 Essay V. *In which Men's Pre-* *Why a wicked Cause is often*
judice against Providence are *prosperous,* p. 138
consider'd, and their Obje-
ctions answer'd, p. 115 *The promiscuous Fate of Persons*
 1. *It is impossible for one Being* *and Things wisely adapted to*
to superintend the World at *our present state,* p. 140
once, *ibid.* *It suggests the Hopes of another*
This answer'd, p. 116 *Life,* p. 141
 2. *Providence suppos'd a Trouble* 8. *Of the Unequal Distribution*
to God, *ibid.* *of Wealth,* p. 143
The Answer to this, *ibid.* *It proceeds from Providence, ib.*
 3. *Providence is below God, and* *Poverty necessary to engage some*
unworthy of him, p. 118 *to the mean, servile Offices of*
This Objection answer'd, *ibid.* *Life,* p. 144
 4. *Providence impossible, because* *To stir up others to the study of*
it requireth the knowledge of *nobler Arts and Sciences, and*
things to come, p. 121 *to improve their Parts and Ca-*
The Answer to this, *ibid.* *pacities,* p. 145
 5. *Providence destroys the Free-* *The Unequal Distribution of*
dom of our Natures, p. 122 *Wealth is necessary for the*
Difficulties no reasonable Ar- *Exercise of Patience, Genero-*
guments against the Truth or *sity, &c.* p. 147
Being of a Thing, *ibid.* 9. *Of the Miseries of Man-*
Some mistake both Providence *kind,* p. 148
and Humane Liberty, p. 123 *Mankind complain unjustly,* 149
Man's Liberty and Freedom *The Miseries and Sorrows of*
asserted, p. 124 *this Life necessary and reaso-*
The true Notion of it stated, 125 *nable,* p. 150
Providence doth not destroy it, *How Easie and Happy one may*
p. 126 *be in this Life,* p. 151
 6. *All things are effectuated by* 10. *If there be a Providence,*
Natural & Proper Means, 128 *God is chargeable with all the*
Why God generally doth so, p. 129 *Wickedness of the World,* p. 152
Many Instances to the contrary,
p. 131 *Mens Sins the Consequences of*
their Freedom, p. 153
Private and Publick Affairs *God hath done all that is necessary*
chiefly govern'd by unseen Ac- *to secure Man from Sin,* p. 153
cidents, and unexpected Occur-
rences, p. 133 *God only permitteth Sin, which*
Of Marriage and Love, p. 134 *is no blemish upon his Provi-*
dence, p. 155
 7. *All things seem the Effects* 11. *The Objection, from the*
Wicked-

The Contents of the Second Part.

- Wickedness of Mankind further insisted on, p. 155
 God not obliged to exert his utmost power for every Creature, p. 156
 Diversity of States and Privileges maketh more for the glory of God, p. 157
 God cannot be said to be unconcern'd or indifferent whether Men be Vertuous or Vicious, p. 159
 God doth willingly permit Sin, p. 161
 How God doth make Sin serve his own Glory, p. 163
 How he has turn'd it to the Good and Advantage of Mankind, p. 165
 12. Of the Afflictions of good Men, p. 167
 Men's Prejudices against Providence, in this particular, proceed from wrong Notions of Happiness and Misery, *ibid.*
 From a false Opinion of the present Life, p. 168
 From a mistake of the true Nature of Love, p. 169
 13. Of Publick Calamities, p. 170
 They are from God, *ibid.*
 To understand them aright, we must consider God's Absolute Power and Dominion, p. 171
 That all Men are Sinners, p. 172
 That we are not proper Judges who are Righteous, *ibid.*
 That it is not in this World that every Man is fully Judg'd, and finally Rewarded, p. 173
 That States and Kingdoms can only be Judg'd and Punish'd here, *ibid.*
 That one Man's Sin may, without injustice, be the occasion of punishing the sin of another, p. 174
 Why God doth reserve Sinners to the times of general Visitation, and how justly the same Punishment may be inflicted on divers Persons not equally guilty, *ibid.*
 When God visiteth a Nation, he doth not always intend to destroy it, p. 175
 An Application of the Whole, shewing God's impartial Justice in Publick Calamities, and the difference he putteth between good and bad Men, *ibid.*
 14. Of committing the Government of the World into the hands of Fools, & wicked Men, p. 179
 This is from God, and it proves a Providence, *ibid.*
 15. If there were a Providence, good Men would be foretold what was to come, to deliver them from Anxiety and Trouble, p. 184
 God's Providence sufficiently demonstrable without this, *ibid.*
 It would be no Advantage to Mankind, to know things beforehand, p. 185
 Things are conceal'd, to try our Trust and Affiance in God, *ib.*
 To oblige us to the Use of Reason and Prudence, &c. p. 186
 God hath sometimes revealed Events unto Men, p. 187
 Why this was done to the Jews more frequently than to Christians, *ibid.*
 16. God's Methods and Measures with the Church, objected against

The Contents of the Second Part.

- against Providence, p. 188
 Of the Clergy and Pastors of the Church, and the wise Providence of God concerning them, p. 189
 Of Persecutions; they render the Church glorious, 194
 They are useful for relicking and setting the Consecration of the Church, as well as for purifying the Members of it, p. 195
 Of Schisms and Heresies; they are permitted, to try the Temper and Sincerity of Men's Minds, p. 197
 They oblige to search out the Truth, and to set a Value upon it, p. 199
 The encrease of Heresies, a grievous Judgment, and the forerunner of utter Destruction, p. 200
 17. The Unreasonableness of Men's Prejudices against Providence shew'd, 202
 18. It is impossible to resolve all the Difficulties and Mysteries of Providence, First, Because it is Infinite, p. 203
 Secondly, God concealeth purposely many of his Ways and Works, ibid.
 Thirdly, Many Acts of Providence are strangely interwoven together, and have a relation to something that doth not yet appear, p. 204
 Essay VI. A general View of Faith in God and Providence, how necessary to the being Just and Righteous, and what it is to live by it, p. 207
 1. What Faith in God is, ibid.
 2. What Faith in Providence is, p. 208
 3. The Evidence and Certainty of both, p. 209
 4. They who do not believe, are unreasonable and perverse, p. 212
 5. This Faith is necessary to Righteousness, p. 213
 6. It renders one Righteous, p. 215
 7. The Faith of the Just, is a constant and Active Principle, ib.
 8. Why the Just are said to live by Faith, and what the Life of Faith is, p. 217
 9. There are Degrees in the Life of Faith; and what Faith obligeth to, is very discernible, p. 219
 10. In reference to God, Faith obligeth, First, To have him in the highest esteem and admiration, p. 220
 Secondly, To love him, p. 223
 Thirdly, To endeavour, above all things to know him, p. 226
 Fourthly, To be devoted to his Interest and Service, p. 228
 Fifthly, To set him always before us, p. 230
 11. In reference to one's self; Faith teacheth Humility, p. 231
 Forbids Mummring, ibid.
 Persuades to Contentment, ibid.
 It requires us to consider our Genius and Endowments, p. 232
 To ascribe to God the Success of our Endeavours, and to trust only to his Power, ibid.
 Not to impute our Sins to God, p. 233
 To observe all Accidents and Occurrences,

The Contents of the Second Part.

currents,	p. 234	their Outward Fate,	p. 240
To receive both Good and Evil		It giveth right Notions of Go-	
from God, whatever be the		vernment,	p. 242
Means and Instruments,	ibid.	It sheweth, that we ought to draw	
Faith makes Prayer necessary,		no certain Conclusion from the	
	p. 235	present state and circumstances	
12. In reference to others, Faith		of any People,	ibid.
forbids Envy and Contempt,		It forbids Censuring the Com-	
	p. 236	mon State of Humane Affairs,	
It obligeth to consider all the			p. 244
Changes which happen to o-		It gives true Instructions con-	
thers,	p. 238	cerning Publick Calamities,	
13. In reference to Publick			ibid.
Transactions, Faith obligeth		Some Reflections on the present	
to regard the Intrinsic Na-		State of Europe,	p. 245
ture of Things, rather than		The Conclusion,	p. 249

E R R A T A.

Page 4. line 28. for *this* r. *his*, p. 17. l. 28. for *shew* r. *sure*, p. 23.
 l. 18. for *these* r. *this*, p. 72. l. 1. r. *would*, p. 74. l. 8. r. *precocious*,
 p. 76. l. 32 for *is* r. *are*, p. 82. l. 13. for *is* r. *are*, p. 113. l. 12. r. *lib.*,
 c. 18. of the English Edit. 8°. p. 122. l. 25. dele of, p. 202. l. 3. after uni-
 versally add *received*, p. 203. l. 15. r. *greater*.

PART II.

INTRODUCTION.

Shewing the Force of Prejudice, how unreasonable it is, and that Unbelief is both a Misfortune and Crime.

AS a righteous Judge, so a serious and judicious Enquirer after Truth, ought to be free, disinterested, impartial, and willing to be informed, otherwise both the one and the other shall miscarry. There is no convincing the Understanding, when Affections or Interest carry it aside; for they either blind it that it cannot see, or very much byass it, that it hesitates, struggles, delays judging, and asks for more

B

Evidence.

Evidence, like a corrupt Judge who is unwilling to decide the Cause in which he has been bribed, or to give out that Sentence which must displease his Friend, or some on whom he depends. Such use to regard Persons rather than the Merits of the Cause, to shift and bear off the means of Information, to overlook the main evidence, and to quarrel at some small Circumstances. They cavil and raise Objections; and when they are beat from one Argument they catch hold of another, shewing, by their whole Carriage, an obstinate hardness, which is resolved not to yield whatever be proposed.

An eminent instance of this Partiality was in the Scribes and Pharisees against Jesus Christ: For if the History of the Gospel be true and ingenuously written (to speak no more highly of it at present) Jesus Christ spoke as never Man spoke, and did work Miracles beyond any before him, and assumed an Authority above the Prophets; that is, his Doctrine was such, his Works such, and the manner of his Appearance such, and all the Circumstances of his Life such as were proper to convince the *Jews*, if not that he was the Messiah, yet at least that he was a Prophet, and one come from their God. Yet their Humour and Interest would not let them receive him, excusing themselves, from the meanness of his Birth, and the place of his Residence, as if his being a Carpenter's Son, and dwelling in *Galilee*, had been sufficient to invalidate the Demonstration of the spirit and power which he laid before them; which was the more inexcusable in them, because they believed and received the Prophet *AMOS*, who was one of the Herd-men of *Tekoa*.

Just so, Atheists affecting a licentious Liberty, which may free them from the Obligation of pleasing any but themselves, or of being accountable to another; and this being inconsistent with the Belief of a Deity, therefore they with all their might, set themselves to disprove the Existence of God. And because one of the clearest Proofs is drawn from the Works of God, therefore, to baffle this Proof, they frame Hypotheses, and study

study to shew it possible that the World might have been produced without the assistance of an Almighty Wise Being. And if they can but fancy a bare Possibility tho' attended with the highest Improbability, they take it for granted, that it was so, if they stumble on any like a plausible Explication how things are according to the present established Laws, they are transported, as the Mathematician was, when he found his Demonstration. Here they rest, and stop their Enquiry, and pretend that this solves all Difficulties ; which is, as if one should decide the Controversy, whether a Watch was the Invention and Contrivance of an Artist negatively, because there could be given a Mechanical Account of its Motion. How deservedly should he be laugh'd at, who would assert the Possibility of producing a Watch without an Artist ; and yet this Assertion is not so mad, as to say that such an Incomprehensible Quantity of Matter as is in the World might receive those various Motions and Determinations which we see, without an Intelligent Omnipotent Being, as Dr. Bentley hath very well made out in his Lectures. Moreover, when they are driven to own an Intelligent Being to be the first Cause of all things, they will not admit the necessary Consequences of that Truth ; they shut him up within the Clouds, and will not allow him any intermeddling here below ; as if the Almighty (when he created the World) had turned it off to shift for it self. As long as they can, they resist the Existence of a Deity ; and when they can do it no longer, then they wrangle about the Notion of a God ; and he must be, not what he is, in his own Nature, but what they please to make him : And to be sure, nothing is ascribed to him, which may put them under any Obligation to fear or serve him.

Thus Men are stubborn and perverse to their own Ruin : Unreasonable Prejudice and Partiality, irregular Affections, and a vicious Interest is the Cause why they do not believe ; and this makes their Unbelief a Crime, which few consider or take any serious notice of. This

shews them to be without Equity, of an unrighteous Constitution, and very unjust; so that unbelief is not only a misfortune, but it is culpable, a very Sin, and the Mother of much Sin. It is an ordinary Saying, That Men are not answerable for their Belief, and that one cannot believe more or less than he doth; but this is both a gross and a dangerous Error, which contradicts the whole Tenour of the Sacred Writings, where Unbelief is represented as sufficient alone to merit the severest Punishment whether Temporal or Eternal. It is true, one cannot believe a thing until it be laid before him, and his perswasion must be according to the evidence of it. But may not one have a thing laid before him, and not consider it? May not he have the means of knowing it, and not make use of them? May not sufficient matter of Conviction be given, and yet actual Conviction not follow? because of an averseness to the thing, and of a perverse unwillingness to admit it, of which there are many instances; and in that case, is Ignorance no Fault? has such a disbelief no guilt attending it? Is not the guilt more or less according to the Nature and Importance of the thing? for trivial things may be passed over, it is no matter whether they be true or false: but what is of moment and use, ought to be seriously examined. Shall, or can the Atheist be excused? Shall his Atheism, and all the Effects and Expressions of it pass for Innocence, because he believes no God? seeing the World, and all that is in it, loudly proclaim it in his Ears; shall this *Innocence* (to use the new affected word of the Party) be his excuse?

But tho' we must lay the foundation of our Faith in the Existence of God, yet we must not rest there, but proceed to build upon it. It is of importance to know how things came to be; but it is of more importance to know, whether the World be governed; whether God holds the Place of Judge amongst Men; and whether we may expect Rewards and Punishments according to our Deeds; which shall be the Subject of our next Enquiry;
and

and which we hope to make also plain to such as are willing to be informed, and who will be contented with reasonable Satisfaction.

Some judged our last *Essays* about a Deity too short, and they were contrived so purposely; because so many have of late undertaken the proof of it. But if that was a Defect, it will be sufficiently made up by the present *Essays*, for what evinceth a Providence proveth a God. And I chused to enlarge rather on this, because it is not so commonly insisted on. Here, perhaps, some Proofs are brought, which are new, or but little taken notice of: But as there was not in the former, so neither is there in these *Essays* any particular studied aim to surprise with new thoughts. All the care is to prove clearly what is undertaken, whether it be by things new or old; for if the Arguments be solid in themselves, it is little matter whether others have used them or passed them by. Nor am I further curious about my Stile and Language, than to have it clear, just and expressive of my meaning, and the Truths I offer. Some require that the Atheist and Deist be attacked after their own way of Speaking and Writing, that is, by Banter and surprizing flights of Wit: And as indeed they may be roundly paid off this way, so * two of late have done it to very good purpose: But what is proper for a Dialogue doth not so well become another Discourse. It is very reasonable and fit sometimes to retort Wit and Jest upon them, to expose their Folly and Impudence, and to convince them (if possible) that it is some other thing than Dulness which keeps others from associating with them. But on the other hand, when the Design is to shew the solid Foundation on which those Important Truths do stand, Efforts of Wit are not so proper and becoming as grave convincing Reasons and strong Arguments.

* Dr. Nichols,
Mr. Collier.

6 *Providence proved from the Nature of God.*

ESSAY I.

Providence proved from the Nature of God.

1. **T**His great Truth has its Foundation first in the Nature of God himself, which may be clearly perceived by taking a view of it. It appears sufficiently from what hath been said, That God, or that intelligent Being, which gave being to all things else, is Almighty in Power, and Infinite in Wisdom: He is very unreasonable that requires a greater Demonstration of it; and it is impossible to satisfy him. He certainly can do all things who made all things, and is the very cause of their Existence. Nothing is too hard for him, or above his reach: Nay, Fancy it self cannot go beyond either the greatness or the multitude of his Works; nor perhaps is there any thing possible which he hath not actually made, for all conceivable Perfections and Excellencies are to be found somewhere. And he who has Power to make a thing, has also Power to unmake it: Every Agent can destroy his own Work; the Potter can break the Vessel he hath made; the Artist can deface his own Handy-work; and God who had Power to create the World, has also, without doubt, Power to destroy it, and to reduce it to what he pleases, to what it was at first, that is, to nothing.

2. And whatever proves his Omnipotency, does also prove him infinitely Wise: for all the effects of his Power are expressions of his Wisdom: His Power only works as it is directed by his Wisdom; they both co-operate together. All the ostentation of Power is to excellent Ends and Purposes; he must certainly know, and perfectly well understand the Nature, Properties, and Effects of his own Works, at least what necessarily flows from them; or else he doth not understand his own Works so well, as every Artist doth his, which is a great absurdity.

Nothing

Nothing therefore can be more evident than that, according to the Psalmist, *The Lord is great, of great Power, and his Understanding is infinite.* Which qualifies him to govern the World, as his creating it, gives him a right to it, and an absolute Authority over it.

3. And further, it clearly appears that God is eternal, and doth exist necessarily; for if he had not been from all Eternity, he could never have been, nor yet other things. And his being from Eternity proceeds from his very Essence, which necessarily exists, and which also secures his Existence to all Eternity: So that the description of God in Scripture, *I am that I am*, is very emphatical, most proper, and every way suitable to his Nature. All other things are unstable; they had a beginning; they proceed to a certain degree, at which they do not stand or fix; but run back until they vanish; and even these things that are most fixed have not their stability in their own Nature, but by the free and arbitrary Will of God. Wherefore he only is always the same, immutable in his Nature and Attributes, because necessary Existence is essential to him.

4. Again, seeing God exists thus necessarily, by virtue of the plenitude of his Essence, from whence it is that he hath all that Power and Wisdom which we have seen and demonstrated: we must conclude that he is a most perfect Being, not only without all Defects and Imperfections, but also actually possessing all true Perfections and Excellencies, to the degree and measure of Infinite. He can want Nothing, because he is in himself all that is possible or conceivable, even infinite fulness and sufficiency. His Nature, his Properties, and Attributes can admit of no limits; nor can his Essence be circumscribed; for it was not infinite, if it could be either confined or excluded. Wherefore those Sayings in Scripture, *That the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain God; that he fills both Heaven and Earth*, that is, he is both far and near, are all true in the strictest sense; they are founded upon the true and clear Idea of God, and his very Intrinsic

8 *Providence proved from the Nature of God.*

Nature, which cannot alter or suffer any change. This makes God present every where, and to be acquainted with every thing, and extends his immensity beyond the World it self, which is illimited by either reason or imagination. There is no obscurity or difficulty in apprehending this, but what necessarily arises from the Nature of the thing, which being infinite, cannot therefore be fully comprehended or perfectly understood by us who are finite. The divine Nature and Essence may be contemplated, but it cannot be grasped fully by us ; we may fill our Minds with it, but can never exhaust its fulness, because our Faculties are not adequated to it ; for as what is beyond the Clouds, and above the Sky, becomes only invisible by the shortness of our sight ; for could our sight reach thither, things there would be as visible as what is here below. So the incomprehensibility or unintelligibleness of the Divine Essence, or Attributes, or Works, is only to be ascribed to the want of such adequate Faculties ; for they are certainly intelligible in themselves, and should be clearly understood and comprehended by one of infinite Understanding.

5. But if any find difficulty in conceiving God's immensity, neither can apprehend how his Nature or Essence makes him omnipresent ; yet they may easily conceive, that, by his omnipotent Power and infinite Wisdom, he could so frame the World, and establish such Laws and Order in it, as to make him perfectly understand all that is transacted therein. Just as we see the Soul, by a mysterious and unknown way, is privy to, and presently sensible of all that passes within the Body, or about it. It knows, without any trouble or difficulty, instantly what the Body feels, sees, hears, tastes, smells, and all the pain or pleasure with which any Part is affected, as if it was co-extended with the Body, and did actually reside in every Part. I would not have the Parallel too nicely and curiously drawn out ; nor would I have any to think the divine Mind a Soul to the World, nor the World a Body to that Soul : But this compendious summ
of

of an omnipresence of the Soul with respect to the Body, may figure and help us to understand the intimate presence of God, by which he knows and understands all that is, or happens in the World: For the Proportion betwixt the Human Soul and Human Body is more adequate, than that betwixt the World and the divine Mind; because the one is betwixt finite and finite, and the other is betwixt finite and infinite. If therefore the finite Soul of Man can have such particular and speedy notice of all the motions in the little World, and impressions which are made upon it; is it absurd or unconceivable that the infinite Spirit of God should be acquainted with all the Motions, Accidents, and Occurrences in the greater World, tho' infinitely extended.

6. Certainly when he first made the World, he must have had it all at once under his view, as an Artift his Work, which otherwise he cannot adjust; and a particular intelligence of the present state and circumstances of every thing (which may be performed by his Almighty Power and Infinite Wisdom) is still necessary to the preservation of the World; which God has designed: for God did not make the World merely to try his Skill, but with a design to preserve it. God viewed his Work, and *saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.* And being thus Pleased with his Work, he would not abandon it; but resolved to take a care of it. It is to impeach the divine Wisdom, to say or think that God is unconcerned in the things that he hath made; that he will let the World go to Ruin, or suffer Alterations to happen; which are not for his own Honour and Glory, and agreeable to the ends he had of creating it. Wherefore it must necessarily follow, that all things are kept under his All-seeing Eye. His Eye still watcheth over the World, to spy out what happens in it: He must have the knowledge of all things, even the most secret, most hidden and remote, either by the infinity of his Essence, or the contrivance of his omnipotent Wisdom. It must be absolutely certain what the Apostle saith, *That there*

10 *Providence proved from the Nature of God.*

there is not any Creature which is not manifest in his sight ; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do, Heb. 4. 13. David being transported with a deep sense and conviction of this Truth, expresseth it very elegantly, without affecting big Hyperboles, or high Metaphorical Strains, but observing strictly the propriety of Speech, and the Simple Nature of the thing ; thus, O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me ; thou know'st my down-sitting and mine up-rising ; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses't my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my Tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me ; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy Presence ? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in Hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea ; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the Darknes shall cover me ; even the Night shall be Light about me. Yea, the Darknes hideth not from thee ; but the Night shineth as the Day : The Darknes and the Light are both alike to thee, Psal. 139. from the 1st. Verse to the 13th.

7. Thus it is clear from a Contemplation of the divine Nature, that God actually presides in the World, must know all that is done in it, and doth rule and dispose all things as it pleaseth him. It is no Usurpation for God to assume Absolute and Arbitrary Government ; for his Creation makes his title Just, and without Exception ; as his Eternity makes an Interregnum impossible, and secures this Universal Monarchy from devolving unto another. Nor is it too great for his management, being he is of Almighty Power, and of Infinite Wisdom. Neither is there any reason to fear Errors and Mistakes from want of true information ; seeing he is present every where by his infinite and incomprehensible
Essence,

Essence, or by his almighty contrivance has established a perfect and sure intelligence.

There is only one thing more to be added, to reconcile all the World to this Dominion, which God hath over them, and to this Authority which he exerciseth amongst them; to take away all aversion from it, and to make them perfectly in love with it: And that is, to shew that this Dominion shall never degenerate into tyranny, neither this Authority be ever abused. Tho' God governs absolutely and irresistibly; yet there shall never be any just occasion of grievances: He will impose no Yoke but what is light and easie; nor will he exact any thing but what is reasonable and just, which we shall be convinced of by another view of the Divine Nature, by which we shall discern another Perfection essential to God, which beautifies and adorns all the rest; which renders him as worthy to be loved as feared; and which assures us of all imaginable Advantage from him, if we do not hinder it by a perverse and unworthy Behaviour.

8. This so adorable Perfection is Goodness, which is as Intrinsic and Essential to the Divine Nature, as any of the other; for without this he could not be perfect, much less infinitely perfect. They have no true Idea of God, who apprehend him malevolent, churlish, or envious. He doth not grudge the Happiness of any of his Creatures; for their Happiness doth not any ways impair his: Nay, he contrives and searches out how he may make others happy. Nor can there be any reason given why the World was made, and filled with such diversity of Beings, but only that God might have so many occasions of communicating himself, and of displaying his glorious Attributes. God was from all Eternity conscious of his own Power, and therefore did not make the World, that he might know what, and how much he could do; nor could he propose any real addition to his Happiness or Greatness; for what can be added to an infinitely perfect Being? Or what can such a
Being

12 *Providence proved from the Nature of God.*

Being want? the only Motive then was Goodness: and all the Satisfaction he can be supposed to have in other Beings is, that in, and by them, he can diffuse his own Excellencies. And consequently the more capable any Creature is to receive these Effluxes and Communications of the Deity, the more capable it is to partake of the Divine Nature, the more he loveth it, it is his peculiar Care, and the greater Object of his delight. Man is one of those Creatures who are capable thus to enjoy God, and therefore has no cause to entertain dreadful apprehensions of the Deity, if he do not turn away from God, shun and condemn him. If Man would but know himself, retain his Perfections, and pursue his Nature, and the ends for which he was designed; if he would but give his Mind to know God, and to contemplate his Works, which (of themselves) yield unspeakable pleasure and satisfaction, because they are wonderful and glorious; if he would be but grateful to the Author of his being, and pay due respect and reverence to that infinite Majesty; I say, if Man would but do these things, which are neither hard nor unreasonable, he should be the Favourite of Heaven, the Darling of Almighty God: God would set his Heart upon him, and the Most High would honour him with great Dignity and expressions of his infinite Bounty.

O happy we, if we knew our own Happiness! protected by Omnipotency, guided by infallible Wisdom, courted and caressed by infinite Goodness, and under a Government, which is indeed very strict, but whose chief design is to render us infinitely and eternally happy. What Ignorance and Perverseness to murmur against this Government! What Folly to have an averseness to it, and to desire to be freed from it! And what Madness to revolt, or to affront it! If God cannot make us happy, who, I pray, can do it? If Justice and Equity cannot be had from him, where may we look for them? Certainly they who plot against God, plot against their own interest, they hatch Mischief to themselves, they
cannot

cannot escape Ruin. *He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Yea, he shall speak to them in his Wrath, and vex them in his sore Displeasure.*

9. For God will maintain his own honour, and the dignity of his Government. As he has Power to reward the Tractable and Obedient, and those who diligently seek him; so he has Power to punish the Refractory and Disobedient. And there is no cause to fear that he shall mistake one for the other; for he knoweth each of them full well; he can distinguish them perfectly: for this Supream Lord *looketh from Heaven, he beholdeth all the Sons of men, from the place of his habitation, he looketh upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth,* as we have already demonstrated.

They miserably delude themselves, who think to pass unknown to God, and who say, he doth not see, neither regard; for he cannot but see: his infinite Essence makes it impossible for him, not to know all things. You may as well suppose him not to be, as not to know every thing that is; for he is not, if he be not infinite, and he is not infinite, if there be any person or thing, to which his Essence, or Power, or Understanding cannot reach. And whatever he sees and knows, he doth, and must regard, either by Approbation or Dislike. That very Goodness which prompted him to create the World, and to make Man capable of his favour, by receiving impressions of his own divine Excellencies; even this shall carry him to correct such as abuse their intellectual Faculties, and that freedom which he hath bestowed on them; for Love produceth Chastisement; and the same very Goodness too will oblige him to fall with severe Punishments upon all incorrigible Persons; that their Misery may make others sensible of their Duty and Happiness; and be as a Hedge or Fence to keep them within the enclosures of Wisdom and Reason. Majesty and Sovereignty is as much seen by inflicting Punishments as conferring Favours. And certainly God, who is the Supream

14 *Providence proved from the Nature of God.*

pream Lord, and Sovereign of all the World, will both exercise and declare his Sovereignty by all proper and suitable ways.

10. They have not right and true notions of God, they quite mistake his Nature, who fancy that he affects Retirement and Solitude, that he is unactive, or that action is uneasy or troublesome to him. He is never idle, but always busy, and employed in the exercise of his infinite Attributes: nor doth his exercising these, create him any trouble; for how great, and wonderful, and astonishing soever his Works be to us; yet, to himself they are only a Thought without any discomposure. His Power, his Wisdom, and all his Attributes are always a working; they are continually employing themselves, and therefore his Justice and Goodness cannot be at rest, but must be expressing themselves too, in such Acts, and in such Degrees as are proportionable to their infiniteness.

All the Divine Attributes work together. As God is not Power alone, nor Wisdom alone, nor any thing else alone; but these and all other Perfections together, which are undivided in him, and only distinguished to give us some sort of clearer Conception of them: So every Act of God doth express all these together. There is no Act of meer Power without Wisdom, nor instance of Wisdom, where there is not also a manifestation of his Power and other Excellencies. When he expresseth Wisdom, he sheweth his Power: when he manifests his Power, he demonstrates his Wisdom: and by both he declares his Goodness, his Love, his Justice, and other God-like qualities.

There is nothing which infinite Wisdom can devise, which infinite Power cannot effect. And whatever infinite Love, Goodness, and Justice would be at, infinite Wisdom and Power bring to pass. And therefore we may certainly conclude, That whatever is good or just, or right, or fit; whatever is proper and agreeable to to the Nature and Dignity of God; whatever may advance

vance his Honour and Glory, or contribute to the Happiness of his Creatures ; that is actually done : for the Goodness and Justice of God must will and desire all this : And if he desire it, it must be ; for he can do what he pleaseth ; and his Will and Desire is the immutable Resolution and steady Decree of what shall be.

11. And hence also we may infer, that God actually exerciseth an absolute Dominion over all things, according to the rules of infinite Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness : for this is more for the Glory of God, and more for the good of his Creatures, than if he should abstract himself from the World altogether, and leave every thing to shift for it self. For by this, God maintaineth the right which his Creation gives, and sheweth the care of his own Works, and declareth that the World was not the Product of Chance, or of any hasty ill concerted Resolution, but a deliberate Effect of the eternal purpose of his Counsel, for illustrating his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, his Justice, Holiness, and Purity, and all other divine Perfections to all eternity. And as God hath Glory, so his Creatures have unspeakable Advantage by his ruling and governing the World ; for this hinders them from running into confusion, and preserves a wise order amongst them. The Necessaries and good things which they want are by this means carefully provided, and the Dangers prevented, which they neither could foresee nor remedy. In a word, hereby their ignorance and weakness is supplied by the Aid and Administration of infinite Wisdom and Power. As a wise Government is preferable to a State of Anarchy ; as good excellent Laws, and a wise well contrived Constitution, in the Hands, and under the Care of a good, wise, and righteous Prince, make People much more happy, than if they had all freedom to do what every one thought right in his own Eyes ; so it makes infinitely more for the good of the World, and all that is in it, that it be under the Tuition and Government of God. And because the state of the World should be so much better
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16 *Providence proved from the Nature of God.*

in this case, therefore it is certainly true, that he doth actually rule it, and that he acteth as Sovereign Lord over all, and as Supream Judge amongst Men. For what moved him to create the World, doth oblige him (if I may say so) to continue it in a good and perfect State. How often hath Pity and Generosity moved Men to help the Weak, to relieve them who were ready to Perish, and to act in the behalf of others, when their doing so interrupted their own quiet and private peace, which was in no danger otherwise? And can it be thought that Man is more compassionate and generous than God? Who can do almighty things without any trouble or disturbance to himself, and who can make all the World rich and happy, without emptying himself. If therefore the Nature, Necessity, or Circumstances of created things require that God should interpose his Power or Wisdom, we may be sure his Goodness shall not be wanting.

12. Thus it appears, that a Providence both general and particular, is evidently deducible from the Nature of God. He who believes a God, and hath any true Idea of him, must necessarily acknowledge a Providence; otherwise he falls into the absurdity of denying the Inseparable Properties and Necessary Consequences of what he owns and holds. For seeing God possesseth Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, and all Perfections infinitely; seeing by virtue of his Essence he is present every where, and acquainted with every thing; and seeing by his infinite Knowledge, he understands perfectly the Capacities and Tendencies of all his Creatures, and the Consequences of all their Actions; it is impossible but that he should intermeddle so as that all may please himself, and be agreeable to those wise and great Ends which he hath proposed in Creating the World. Can we suppose that a wise, skilful and watchful Pilot, who hath aboard with him sufficient hands for working his Ship, Persons who will not make him any resistance, and all other Necessaries; I say, can we reasonably suppose that

that such a Pilot in such circumstances will not prosecute his intended course, that he will abandon the care of the Ship, and suffer it to be tossed by the Waves and driven by the Winds hither and thither, without any steady or certain direction? And yet this Supposition may be made more reasonably, and with infinitely less absurdity, than to think that God neglecteth the World, is unconcerned with it, and neither interesteth himself with what is done in it, nor yet interposeth to keep things right, and to make all serve to the purposes of his own Eternal Counsel. I shall conclude this Head with these words of *Salvian*, *Nam qui nihil aspici à Deo affirmant, prope est ut cui aspectum adimunt, etiam substantiam tollunt; & quem dicunt omnino nil cernere, dicant etiam omnino non esse.* Salv. lib. 4°.

ESSAY II.

Providence proved from the Nature of all created Things.

I. **W**Hosoever will consider attentively the Nature of created things, either each singly by its self, or all of them conjunctly as they have a relation to one another, shall have a shew, proof or demonstration of Providence, or God's governing the World. As the Existence of those visible things demonstrates the Existence of God as the first Cause and Author, so their continuance in being shews his continued Care and Influence; for they cannot subsist of, or by themselves, but only by the Power of him who made them. Self-existence and necessary existence are near of Kin, and belong only to the Idea of God or infinite Essence. Therefore even *Cartesius* saw a necessity of owning a Cause for continuing his own Existence as well as for giving it; because he could perceive no necessary connexion betwixt present
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and future Existence, but the Will of the Author of his Being. Hence also it is that commonly Philosophers establish it as a Maxim, that there is the same Power requisite to the Preservation of a thing as to the Creation or first Production of it; for they make Preservation (not without good reason) to be but a continued Creation. If this be not clearly perceived, it is, because the Nature of Essence and Existence are things abstract, and not obvious to sense. It requires a Mind inured to Speculation to understand these well, or to reason about them. What subsists or exists, must do so, either by virtue of its own intrinsic Essence, or by the influence of some external Cause: The first way is peculiar to infinite Essence, that is, God; therefore the Existence, and Subsistence of other things too, which are neither infinite nor necessary, must, and can only be ascribed to him: for to have endued them with a Power of subsisting by themselves, was to have communicated an incommunicable Attribute of infinite or necessary Essence. What blinds or obfuscates our conception in this Matter, is the prejudice which Artificial Works give. We see the Works of Men subsist after they are out of the hand of him who made them, and altogether without his Care and Inspection; which makes some fancy that the World once created, needed no more of the divine Care, assistance, or Concurrence. But the Parallel is not Just, and therefore neither can the Inferences be right or true; for all that Men do is to make some impressions on natural Bodies, to give them some external Modification, or to determine their natural Power and Motions, which Impressions, Modifications, and Determinations of Motion are sustainable by their own Essence, and the Will of God, without the continued concurrence of the Artificer: But then this Essence which sustains and keeps these, must be sustained and supported by something besides it self, unless we will ascribe to every thing a plenitude or infinity of Essence, that is, make every thing a God. This also serves to solve the Objection drawn
from

from the Laws of Motion : for tho' according to the present established Laws of Motion, what is once moved, must continue moving until it be stopped ; yet it will not follow that things created must continue in being, until, by some violence, they be destroyed ; for there is a great difference betwixt Motion and Existence : Motion is finite, and only an external impression which a finite Nature or Essence is capable to retain, and which insensible matter cannot be supposed to resist, and therefore must necessarily continue moved until it meet with some stop or obstruction. But Existence is intrinsic, and no ways a necessary Property of finite Nature and Essence ; and therefore must have another Cause, because this is the necessary Concomitant of, and only flows from infinite Essence, which exists by it self, and is the actual Cause of the duration or continued Existence of all other things.

2. Thus if we may reason justly from the Nature of things, nothing exists necessarily but God himself ; and whatever doth exist, doth so merely by his Power and Will. And if his Will and Power be the only Cause of the Existence of other things, then his Will and Power do actually exert themselves where-ever any thing exists, for things must necessarily cease to be when he withdraws or suspends his Will and Power, which as has been said, is the only Cause of their Existence : and therefore it is most certain and evident, that there are as many Instances or Demonstrations of the Care and Providence of God, as there are things existent ; for their Continuance and Preservation proceed only from his continued Will and Power. So that we may use the Poet's Expression in the strictest sense,

Præsentemque refert qualibet Herba Deum.

3. Hence it is that in Scripture (which certainly contains the true Principles of even Natural Philosophy, and which gives greater light to the discovery of it, than all

the Writings of the World) the Preservation of all things is ascribed to the particular and peculiar influence of the Power of God: *He is not far from every one of us* (saith St. Paul) *for in him we live, move, and have our being*, Act. 17. 27. *These wait all upon thee* (saith the Psalmist) *that thou mayst give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them, they gather, thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled. Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the Earth*, Psal. 104. 27, &c. According to the Philosophy of the Scripture, all things have a particular dependence upon God, both as to Essence and Existence, being and well-being. *Two Sparrows are sold for a farthing, yet one of them cannot fall to the ground without God*; nay, it is said, *that the very hairs of our head are numbered*, and that we do not lose them but as he ordereth it.

Atheists have no reason to laugh at my adducing Scripture Texts, before I prove the Divine Authority of the Scripture, and that too, for convincing Men who deny it: for I do not urge these Texts upon the account of their Divinity, which as yet they do not acknowledge: I only propose them as proper Illustrations and Instructions from Men who understood very well the Subject we are upon, and who spoke from a deep sense and knowledge of the infinite and incomprehensible Essence of God, and of the emptiness and nothingness (I know not what to call it) of all created things. *Moses* and *Jesus Christ*, abstracting from the Inspiration of the one, and the Divinity of the other, may be compared with any Philosopher or Naturalist that ever lived; for their Discourses shew more Knowledge of Nature, and a greater Observation of Natural things, than what is to be met with any where else: And what they know and have observed, they deliver with more Candour than other Men; and therefore what they say ought to be esteemed of as much weight and authority as the Judgment of
Lawyers,

Lawyers, Physicians, and Mathematicians in those matters which properly appertain to them, and which they have particularly studied, and whom (when we know them to be ingenious) we trust and believe, though we have not such a sense or clear comprehension of the thing as they, it being above our reach, and requiring their Study and Application of Mind to the perceiving it.

4. Now both the one and the other tell us, that *Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God*, that is, to speak strictly and philosophically, Bread is not the Staff of Life, nor doth it nourish by any intrinsic or inseparable vertue that it hath of it self; but that which sustains Man's Life, is the Supernatural influence of the Will and Decree of God, which is not tied to Bread or other ordinary Nourishment, and without which, Bread and all other things are ineffectual. And I am perswaded that this Immediate and Supernatural influence from God, is that *æthereum*, that *daily Bread* which we pray for in the *Lord's Prayer*. For the design of this Prayer is to lift up our Minds above all outward things, and to unite them to God, who ought to take up all our Thoughts as one who hath Supream Authority over us, and on whom we entirely depend, both for Existence and Happiness. Heathens, which know not God, and who are but Children in Knowledge, look no higher than the secondary means, and ask only for Food and Raiment, or Money to buy them, as if this were enough to secure their Life. But Christians, who are come to the stature of perfect Men, being wiser, and knowing the Nature and true State of things, ought to apply themselves immediately to the source and first cause of their Life, and Being, and Comfort, and to ask, not Bread, but that which makes Bread to be Bread, and all things else useful, and which (when it is convenient) can sustain us, without the Concurrence of outward or natural things, even the immediate and particular Benediction of the Divine Will and Power, which is the Supernatural Bread; which continues

nues and preserves our Life from day to day, and which we should ask (as is most reasonable) every day.

5. But to return. Whether we consult Judicious Men, or contemplate the Nature of things themselves, we shall be forced to acknowledge that all things must depend wholly on God, and that they continue in being, or cease to be, according as he giveth or withdraweth the influence of his Power and Will. Nature, and what they call Second Causes do not operate necessarily, but as he concurrerth with them, and therefore it is that they often fail. As an absolute Monarch, to maintain the dignity of his State, empowereth Persons under him for different Affairs. to whom the Subjects must apply themselves as they have occasion : which persons act on'y by vertue of that Authority which empowered them, and according to the private and particular Instructions which they have received ; so that tho' they change not, but continue the same ; -yet they who make Addresses to them have not all alike Success ; for some are presently and speedily answered ; others are delayed and put off from one day to another. Some have their requests granted ; others have them altogether rejected and denied. Just so it hath pleased the Wisdom of God to appoint several distinct means of conveying the different Effects of his Almighty Power ; and whoever desire these Effects, must have a recourse to these means as the ordinary Method, otherwise they charge infinite Wisdom with Errors, and sawcily prescribe measures of Government to the great Sovereign of the World. But in the use of all or any of these means, we ought, and must depend on God, who has not tied himself, as he has done us to them ; but who dispenceth his favour in, and by them, as it seemeth good to himself. Whence it is, that their Operations are not always the same, but different, according as he worketh with them : Sometimes they yield what we would be at, and at other times we use them to little purpose. Both which are often plainly declared, and elegantly expressed
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in Scripture to convince us, and to put us in mind that the efficacy of the most proper and natural means doth altogether depend upon the Will of God. *Hosea* gives a plain and remarkable Instance of the first, *And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the Heavens, and they shall hear the Earth, and the Earth shall hear the Corn and the Wine and the Oil, and they shall hear Jezreel, Ch. 2. 21, 22.* Here the Prophet, as a Divine Philosopher, marks out the order and mutual dependency of natural Means and Causes, and how that they all depend entirely upon God: And here he brings in God promising not to interrupt that Course and Order which he established amongst Natural Things; but first to allow the Heavens to dispense their benign Influences, which are absolutely necessary to render the Earth fertile; and then to give the Earth liberty to nourish plentifully all Herbs and Plants proper for Food: And lastly, to make these proper and natural Food to answer the Desires and Appetites of the People, by becoming a Sustenance. Again, there is a passage in *Haggai* relating to the other, *viz.* The uselesness and ineffectualness of all natural means, when God doth not work with them. *Now, saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways, ye have sown much and bring in little; ye eat, but have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye cloath you, but there is none warm, and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes; ye looked for much, and lo it came to little; the reason follows, for when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it, Hag. 1. 5, 6, 9.* which sheweth that the most natural means may be used without any benefit when God withdraws his Blessing. And therefore another Prophet upbraids those whose Eyes were only upon second Causes and natural Means, without respecting God who had appointed them, and by whose Will and Power they did operate. *They take up the fishes (saith he) with the angle: they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag; therefore they rejoyce and are glad. Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their*

their drag: because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous, Hab. 1. 15. which is as if one should pay thanks wholly to him who writes a Patent or Donation granted by the King, without making any acknowledgment of the King's Bounty and Authority, by which only it becomes valid.

6. Wherefore the duration and continuance of particular beings, must not be resolved entirely into the inward Principles and Constitution of their Nature, and the concurrence or influence of outward surrounding Causes, whose Operations are very uncertain. But all must be ascribed to the Supream and Arbitrary Will of God, who first willed all things into Being; who prescribed a general term of duration to the several Species of Beings; and who shortens or continues that term in respect of Individuals, as it pleaseth him. As the time and manner of producing the several Species of Animals, was not first determin'd by any Laws of Mechanism; for what are those Laws which should oblige Terrestrial and Aquatick Animals to such different ways of Generation? What is it that incapacitates the Inhabitants of Seas and Rivers from generating like those upon the Land, seeing one Kind of Whales, the Dog-Fish and some other sort do so? What Inconsistency was there in designing Fowl and what flyeth in the Air, Viviparous, more than the Bat, which bringeth forth alive and giveth Suck? Why should the Crocodile be Oviparous rather than the Otter, and other Amphibious Creatures? What Mechanical Powers ordered a Hen to lay Eggs every Day, a Dove to Hatch every Month, while almost all other kind of Fowl are restrained to once a Year? What necessity was there for the Dog and Cat to go Nine Weeks, when the Hare and Coney, which are equally perfect Creatures, go only Four? How comes it to pass that a Sheep requireth Eight or Nine Months to bring forth very rarely more than One, when a Hog yieldeth in Fifteen Weeks seldom less than Sixteen? and what Reason can be given why some Creatures are sooner perfect than others?

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Even no other Reason for all these things but the Will and Pleasure of Almighty God, to shew himself a free Agent, whose Power is unlimited, and who is not tied up by any Laws, but what he himself has prescribed. So no other Cause can be assigned, that some Insects live only a Day, and others a Season; That the Eagle and Raven should fly out an Hundred Years, and a Sparrow not exceed Five; That an Elephant should be longer liv'd than an Ox; That a Dog hardly passeth Ten, a Horse Thirty, and a Man Fourscore or a Hundred; It is not from any failure of Nourishment, or outward Causes, whose Influence may be thought necessary; nor yet can it be attributed to any natural defect of their Constitution, for it abundantly appears from some rare Instances of the long Life of some particular Men and other Animals, that their Nature is capable to be continued considerably beyond these Limits.

Not to speak now of the *Antidiluvian* Fathers, and to pass what the old Græcian Historians and Poets have said of *Nestor*, *Tiresias*, *Sibylla*, and some others; almost all the German Historians tell of one, who was therefore called *Johannes de Temporibus*, because he lived 360 Years; Sir *Walter Rawleigh* * reports from one he calls a *Historian of good Reputation*,
* Book 1. Chap. 5. §. 5.
 That in the Year 1570. there was an *Indian* presented to *Solyman*, General of the *Turks* Army, who had out-lived 300 Years. And from his own Experience he tells us of a Countess of *Desmond*, in *Munster* in *Ireland*, who was living after the Year 1589. and yet had been Married in *Edward* the Fourth's time, who died 1483. so that she may be reckoned at least 130, or 140. But the Memory of *Thomas Parre* is yet fresher. And every one may upon Enquiry find out some rare Instances of this Nature to convince them, that what seems the fixed term of Man, is and may be exceeded, whilst they who do it differ nothing from the rest, for all abovementioned were begotten and brought up as other Men; were of the same Constitution, and of like Passions

sions and Infirmities. But Almighty God, whose Will is a Law to himself, and a Decree which none can reverse, hath arbitrarily allotted different terms of duration, both to the several Species of Beings, and to the Individuals of the several Species, who of their own Nature are all capable to be equally lengthened, that hereby there might be a continued proof of his Providence; and that it might appear evidently to all reasonable Creatures, that duration doth not necessarily follow Creation and Production, but that God is the Cause of both; and that having received Life and Being from him, we must still depend on him for their Continuance.

7. But if a divine Providence may be thus proved from the duration of Individuals or particular Beings considered singly, and by themselves; it will more clearly appear, when we consider them in relation to one another, as parts and pieces of that Universal Machine of the World; or when we consider the World as a great Engine composed of many different Parts, and of as many different Motions. It requires a great deal of Skill, Care, and Attention to the preserving any curious piece of Workmanship; and the difficulty of preserving it entire, encreaseth according to the multitude of its Parts and Motions. That then this Universal Frame should subsist so long entire, that every one of those Prodigious Globes should move aright in its own Orb or Sphere, when it is certain that they gravitate upon each other; that every Part should keep its proper place and situation; that there should be no clashing at all; that there should be so good Order, such a perfect Harmony and Agreement, that for the space of 6000 Years and upwards there should be no interruption, no breach, no disorder, but all continuing right as at first; that (to speak according to vulgar apprehension) the Sun should always move in so beneficial a Line, and neither remove farther with its necessary heat, nor yet come nearer to hazard a Conflagration of the Earth; or according to the more certain Observation of Modern Mathe-

Mathematicians, that the Earth, notwithstanding of the stupendous and almost incredible rapidity of its Motion, should always have its Axis parallel to its self, and at Oblique Angles with the Plan of its Orb, the least change of which would take away the variety of Seasons, and occasion some places to be burnt up with excessive heat, and others to be destroyed by extream cold; for then some should be always shined upon, and others never at all: That the Moon, whose Motions do perplex Mathematicians, and which can hardly be reduced to any certain Rules, should never be displaced from giving light in the Night, nor from distinguishing times by its different Phases; that these Innumerable splendid Lamps in the Firmament should never be extinct, but continually shine in the same place, and at the same hour appointed; that the Sea should never settle into a standing Pool, but daily ebb and flow for the benefit of Navigation; that it should never overflow the Land, but should keep within its Banks, even when it swells and rageth furiously, tho' it is demonstrable that the Land is not higher than the Sea; that the Earth should hang so surely upon nothing, and be so equally poized as to endure violent Earthquakes, which not only overturn the great and magnificent Works of Men, but do level Mountains; that the Rivers and Springs should never stop their Course, but always flow for the refreshment of Man and Beast; that Animals deprived of Understanding, and endued with spontaneous Motion, should never break their rank, nor go beyond the bounds set to them; that the Swallow, the Lapwing, and other Fowls should know, without teaching, the proper time of going and returning; that the duller Fishes should understand when to approach the Coasts for Man's use, and Salmon, after some Months Voyage in the wide and spacious Sea, should easily find out the Rivers whence they came; that whilst whole Nations do often degenerate from the Virtue and Industry of their Ancestors, and do lose the useful Arts which were amongst them, yet that the several

veral Generations of brute Creatures should never forget their cunning; nor the way and manner of prosecuting their Intentions, that the Art of Weaving Circular and Semicircular Webs should be still amongst Spiders; of Building Sexangular Cells and extracting mellous juice with the Bee; And in a word, that there should be such Constancy and Stedfastness, such Order and Correspondence, and such regular Motions among things without Knowledge, which can neither consult, nor concert what is fitting and best; I say, doth not all this demonstrate a very watchful Providence, which looks to, directs and adjusts all and every thing, so as to carry on the main design, and to secure and promote what is necessary and subservient to it. It is impossible that all this could happen so punctually, so regularly without an over-ruling Wisdom.

I grant that there are certain Laws and settled Ordinances, according to which all things move and act, but that these Laws should be always carefully observed, and that these Ordinances should never be transgressed, can never be without the interposition of an Almighty intelligent Being. It is true, we see Men contrive curious Machines, of many motions, which continue going a long time after they are made, without a new touch from their Maker. And so one may suppose a Work of infinite Wisdom so much more exact and perfect as to continue in all its Motions for ever. But in the Machines of Humane Invention every part is exactly set into another, and doth determine and regulate each others Motions, so that if one move, all move; if one stop, all stop; and there is a necessity that all move either regularly or irregularly; whereas in this vast frame of the World, the innumerable parts move independently, and exert no natural force upon one another; they are indeed so adapted as to be beneficial to one another; but there is no such necessary Connexion and Conjunction as to be a mutual Determination or Regulation. As for Example, The Earth has not its Position from the Sun;
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nor doth the Sun or Moon move and shine by any Natural Determination from the Earth. Therefore as the Peace and Order of a Civil State is only preserved by the continued Tuition and Care of the Government, which wisely manageth the different Interests and Inclinations of the People. Even so the regular State of the Natural World, and the admirable and useful Harmony of its independant parts is only maintained by the wise and continued Care and Providence of God, who, as he made all things at first in *Number, Weight, and Measure*, so he still ballanceth them equally; that tho' they be ignorant of their own Nature and Use, yet they may never either exceed or come short of the same; which was not possible without the immediate guidance of his Almighty Hand; for we see, by some monstrous Births of Animals, and the irregular and disproportionable growth and shooting out of Plants, which happens sometimes, that the Laws of Nature may be transgressed, and that if particular Beings were left to themselves, they would not act regularly, which in process of time would introduce an Universal Confusion, which never falling out as yet, is a certain and clear Demonstration of a particular and special Providence, which upholds the general Fabrick of the World, and preserves the several Kinds of Beings in it, and each individual of these Kinds.

There is no doubt but that Natural Reasons may be given for some things, and a mechanical account of the motion and production of many things. But yet it were very unreasonable from this, either to deny, or question that God did preserve or conduct the Natural World; for, I would ask those that do, Is not Navigation an Art? doth not a Ship sail by Rule? And yet who will say that a Pilot is not necessary? for if there be not one who understands the Points of the Compass, the Motion of the Ship, and the Nature and Working of the Sea, who is Skillful to discern the change of Weather, and who knoweth how to manage the Rudder, and to order the Sails, when to hoise them higher, when to lower them,
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when to take in, when to add more Sail, when to go with a full Wind, when with a side Wind; I say, If there be not one to understand and observe these and other particulars, the Ship shall never steer a right Course, but shall certainly miscarry. Even so the Fabrick of the Material World should perish, and all the Parts of it should be destroyed, if the Natural and Mechanical Motions thereof were not wisely governed by God, who knows them all full well, who adjusts and tempers them, and who both keeps them from interfering, and directs them to their true Ends and Purposes.

Thus, as we shewed before, that a special and particular Providence followed necessarily from the Nature and Attributes of God; for by his infinite Essence he is present every where, knows every thing, and consequently must either approve or dislike the same, and, as there is occasion, interpose his Goodness and Justice. So now it appears, that both the Composition of the World, and the separate Nature of particular Beings, do require such a special Concurrence of the Divine Power and Wisdom, because, without this, neither of them could subsist or be preserved.

ESSAY III.

Providence proved from the Arbitrary Effects in the Material World.

A Serious view of the Nature either of God or other Things is sufficient to satisfy all, that he who made the World doth, and must govern it; yet because all have not that deep sense of the infinite Nature of God, nor yet of the opposite, most narrow, and most limited Nature of created things, as to perceive clearly those necessary Inferences, which are drawn from either.

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I shall in the Third place proceed to evince a Divine Providence, both Universal and Particular, from some Arbitrary Effects, visible in the Material World, with respect to Humane Affairs, which cannot be assigned to any other Cause.

I shall begin with what may be observed in the Material World; and because the Wonders which *Moses* wrought, the standing still of the Sun for the space of a whole Day in *Joshua*, the return of the Shadow upon the Dial of *Abaz* ten Degrees backwards, the preternatural Darkness when Jesus Christ suffered, and such like Miracles depend upon the Credit of the Sacred Writings, I shall therefore pass these, and only make an instance of what is daily observable by all Mankind.

1. There is nothing more obvious than the Weather, Winds, Rains, Thunder, Snow, Frost, and their Effects. These are observed by Old and Young, by those who dwell in the City, and by them who live in the Country. But neither the Observation of particular Men, nor the Experience of all Men from the beginning of the World to this very Day, can reduce them to any certain Measures or Rules, nor yet give sure infallible, or generally probable signs of their coming, continuance, or going away. Mr. *Goad* was at the pains to keep an *Ephemerides* or Journal of the Weather for Thirty Years together, for regulating the Knowledge of it, which he hath since Published, and in which there is marked not only the more notable Changes, but the very smallest Alteration, as the greater Storms and Tempests, so the least Breeze and Gale; In a word, not only what fell out in the different Seasons, but in every particular Day, and the Variations of almost every Hour. This so exact Journal of the Weather and Seasons, I heard was presented to K. *Charles II.* who ordered a trial to be made of it; and it did not so much as hit once for a whole Month or Six Weeks; which made that King to laugh at the Author, as having been taken
up

up with a thing of no use : But it may have its use, tho' not to Prognosticate the Weather certainly. It is true, there are some common and ordinary Effects which attend the Course of the Sun and other Planets, the Nature of the Year or Season, the Temperature of the Climate, the Situation of the Country and its particular Soil ; so that considering these, we may make a round guess at the other. Thus, Winter and Cold Weather, Frost and Snow, seem natural to *December, January, and February*, at least in those Parts of the World which are situated in the Temperate Zone between the Tropick of *Cancer* and the Artick Circle, and adjacent places of the Frigid. And on the contrary, warm and fair Weather come in with the Months of *June and July*. It rains seldom in the Torrid Zone. Unpleasant Fogs, and unwholesom Mists are more common where there are Marshes or watery Places, Woods, Hills, and Mountains. Islands are more infested by Winds, than the Continent ; and whereas in all other Places the Winds blow irregularly and uncertainly, they for the most part keep a more constant course about the *Cape of Good Hope* in the *Pacifick Sea*, and some Parts of the *Atlantick Ocean*, for there ordinarily they have such and such particular Winds, which begin to blow at a certain Season, and continue for some certain Months ; so that they who Sail thither, can keep time, and make their Voyage almost as punctually as the *Tract Scouts* in *Holland*.

But yet in no Place or Country, the Weather or Temper of the Air is so fixed and constant as never to have been changed. The very Trade-Winds do not blow always alike, but are stronger at some times than at others. The River *Nile*, which supplies the want of Rain in *Egypt*, tho' it overflow constantly at set-times, yet not always equally after the same measure, and to the same degree ; for sometimes it amounts only to 16 foot, at other times to 24, and upwards ; so that there is a difference one way or other, even where Constancy seems to be established. The History of every Country
doth

doth mark very sensible and considerable Variations from what seems natural and ordinary: Nay, doth not every Year differ from another almost thorough the whole World: Neither Winter nor Summer is always the same; sometimes they begin sooner and continue longer than at other times. Sometimes the Winter is green, without strong Frosts to impede the Labours of the Husbandman; at other times the Earth is overcharged with Snow, and the Plough is laid up for some Months. One Year the Summer is fair, dry, and of a scorching heat; another Year it is wet and rainy, and its heat very moderate. The Seasons of Spring and Harvest sometimes begin early, and sometimes fall late. Sometimes the Spring smileth upon the Earth, looseneth the obstinate Ground, and bringeth forth the imprisoned Herbs and Plants, to the Comfort of Man and Beast: at other times it frowns, is severe, and blasts every thing that offers to bud and put forth its head. One Year the Spring, Summer, and Harvest are Friends, and what the first commits to the Care of the other two, they faithfully keep, and deliver up: but another Year this desirable Truce is broken, and the Projects of the Spring are defeated by the unkindly Weather which follows. Sometimes we have the former and latter Rain in their proper Seasons, at other times an excessive Drought. Sometimes the Heavens are as Brass, and the Earth as Iron, so that neither Dew droppeth from the one, nor Vapours arise from the other. Again they threaten a New Deluge. Ordinarily the Air is Serene and Wholesome, which invites People Abroad: but sometimes also it is so Contagious, as that ones Security lies in keeping close within Doors.

2. Now whence proceed these things? What is the Cause of such Variations? Certainly they can only be ascribed to God, and are a Demonstration that the World is not a mere Machine, moved by unalterable Mechanical Laws, but governed by the Wise and Arbitrary

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trary Will of God ; for if the World moved necessarily or mechanically. without the guidance and interposition of Divine and Infinite Wisdom, the Effects would be certain and regular, as the Motions of a Clock, which strikes Twelve always at Noon, if it go right : or like the same Clock, if it once vary in the least, it could not of its own accord fall right again.

I do not deny that there are Natural Causes of these things about which we are now speaking. I do not pretend that God worketh a Miracle, or maketh a New Creation each time that it raineth, snoweth, or bloweth a Wind ; but I say only, that God keepeth the management of these Natural Causes in his own hand, and disposeth them at his Pleasure ; for if it was not so, there would be no Variation ; every Year would be alike ; the Seasons would be as constant and certain as the Course of the Sun or Moon ; they would every Year be the same ; it would Snow and Rain regularly ; the Vapours would arise equally at the same time of the Year ; and the Clouds could not forbear to discharge themselves when swelled with Water : Whereas now there are no constant or fixed times, no settled measures of Weather, Wind, and Rain, which is an evident Proof that they are the Arbitrary Effects of a Divine Providence, to keep Man both mindful of God, and in a humble dependance upon him : Therefore Mr. Goad abovenamed, who seems to have studied the Natural Causes of these things as much as any, doth declare that the various Phænomena of the Airy Region, cannot be solved without a Providence, and that no other Reason can be given why it Rains *hic & nunc*.

3. By this Argument St. Paul proved to them at *Lystra*, that both they, and the rest of the Heathen World had a sufficient Evidence of God and his Providence. *The living God* (saith he) *who made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that is therein, suffered all Nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave rain from Heaven, and fruitful*

ful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness, Act. 14. 16, 17. Nature is not the Cause of those Effects, but only the Instrument by which they are produced; for Nature of it self cannot vary: Nature is employed, and exerteth its force, but only when God giveth the word. God thundereth marvellously with his Voice; great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend. For he saith to the snow, be thou upon the Earth: Likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength. Out of the South cometh the whirlwind, and cold out of the North; but by the breath of God frost is given, and the breadth of the waters is straitned. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud; he scattereth his bright cloud, and it is turned round about by his counsels, that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the Earth, he causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy, Job 37. 5, &c.

Fair and Foul Weather, Cold and Heat, Frost, Snow and Hail, Winds, Storms and Tempests, Thunder, Lightning, and Earthquakes, and all the Changes in the Air and Cloudy Regions, are ascribed in Scripture to God, and reckoned up as particular acts of his special Providence, for teaching the Children of Men the fear of the Lord, and to oblige them to frame their Doings so as to please him. And it is impossible to give any rational account of those things, without a reference to Divine Providence, and those excellent Ends which it proposeth by these Dispensations. No Philosophy can propose any thing like a Satisfaction why one Year should be good and another bad? Why it should Rain in one place rather than another? Why one place should be Scorched up, while another adjacent has abundance of Water? Why in one and the same Year, there should be both Plenty and Scarcity, not only in different Countries, but in the divers Provinces of the same Kingdom, and in the several Farms of the same Province, tho' they be in the same Climate, under the same Degree, and alike favourably situated to receive the Influences of

the Sun and Weather. I say, no Philosophy can reasonably resolve these and such like things, but the Divine Philosophy of the Scripture, whose Principles about this we have unfolded in *Deut.* 28. *Hosea* 2. and many other places.

Would you know, why a Year is good? why the Weather is proper and seasonable? why Corn and Cattle prosper? take it from *Deut.* 11. 13. *And it shall come to pass, that if ye shall hearken diligently unto my Commandments, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the Rain of your Land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil; and I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattel, that thou mayest eat and be full.* Would you understand why on the contrary all things go cross? why, it is neither well with Man nor Beast? why there is Scarcity, Famine, Drought, Blasting and Mildew and the Palmer Worm? why it is well with one place while it is ill with another? Consider *Hos.* 2. 8. *She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and Gold which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wooll and my flax given to cover her nakedness.* Read also *Amos* 4. 6, 7, &c. *And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your Cities, and want of Bread in all your places, yet have you not returned unto me, saith the Lord.* And also, *I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest, and caused it to rain upon one City, and caused it not to rain upon another; one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered; so two or three Cities wandered into one City to drink water, but they were not satisfied, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.* I have smitten you with blasting and mildew; when your gardens, and your vineyards, and your fig-trees and your olive-trees encreased, the palmer worm devoured them, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

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For so (addeth the Prophet) *He that formed the mountains, and created the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the Earth, the Lord the God of Hosts is his Name.* And his Hosts are the Elements and their innumerable Compositions, Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, and *stormy wind fulfilling his Word.* When he pleaseth, he covereth the Heavens with Clouds, he prepareth Rain for the Earth, and maketh Grass to grow upon the Mountains; *He sendeth forth his Commandment upon Earth, his word runneth very swiftly.* He giveth snow like wooll, he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth his Ice like morsels, and none can stand before his cold. He sendeth out his word and melteth them. He causeth his wind to blow and the waters flow, *Pf. 147.* To him only belong the Treasures of Snow and Hail, which he hath reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war. Who else but He can bind the sweet Influences of the *Pleiades*? or loose the bands of *Orion*, or bring forth *Maxaroth* in his Season? or guide *Arcturus* with his Sons? neither doth any other know the Ordinances of Heaven, or can set the Dominion thereof upon Earth; and therefore to him, and to him only must be ascribed all these Variations in the Heavens, in the Air, and Cloudy Regions.

And all this might be understood without a Revelation; if Men were not miserably dull, and unreasonably stupid, there would be no need of an Inspired Prophet to teach this. By Natural Reason and Common Sense, Men may read and discern these things to be the doings of God, for such ends and purposes, for they are legible in their Effects and Consequences, which are of that Importance as to awaken our Consideration, and so timed as to instruct us clearly both whence they come and upon what account.

4. To shut up this Argument, I say that tho' fair and foul Weather, Wind, Rain, Snow, Hail, Thunder, Lightning, Storms, Tempests, &c. proceed immediately

ately from Natural Causes, and are the proper Effects of such Causes ; yet it seems evident and demonstrable from their Variableness and Uncertainty, that the particular determination of both these Causes and Effects, is neither from blind Nature, nor any Mechanical or Immutable Law established in the Material World : for the Effects of meer Mechanism and such Immutable Laws are certain and invariable. Wherefore the Changes observable in every Country must either be reckoned meerly casual, or ascribed to the Arbitrary Pleasure of some Intelligent Being, Superiour to Nature and all Material Causes, which can be none other than God. To say they are casual, is to speak neither like a Wise man nor Philosopher ; for there is no such thing as Chance or Casualty in the World ; because what seems to be most so hath a real cause, tho' unknown to us ; and therefore Chance and Casualty are only Words and Phrases which respect the expectation and foresight of Men. And consequently all these occurrences in the Material World must be referred to the Infinitely wise God as the Authour, who wisely useth these means to make himself known to the Children of Men, and to awaken them to a due Consideration of his Being, Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, and special Providence. *Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain ? or can the Heavens give showers ? Art not thou he, O Lord our God ? therefore we will wait upon thee ; for thou hast made all these things, Jer. 14. 22.*

5. All I can foresee which may be objected against this Argument for a Providence in the management and guidance of the Material World, is, " That these Instances now insisted on, are to be met with in Deserts and Places not Inhabited, and where there can be no design of instructing Mankind by them, or of using them as Rewards and Encouragements to the Good, or as Terrors and Punishments to the Bad ; and consequently that there is no reason to give them any such Interpretation in the habitable Parts of the World ;

“ World ; and therefore also that they are not the Effects of a Divine Providence. Moreover in the habitable Parts of the World, we see (as some say) that there is at no time a wise distribution of rain; for it showers down upon the High-ways, stony and flinty Rocks, which can produce nothing, as well as upon Meadows, Corn-Fields, Orchards and Vineyards; nay, it falls upon Rivers and the Sea it self, in as great Quantity as upon the Land, tho’ it cannot be said that they have need to be moistned. VVhat! (will some of the Deists say) can a wise Man be at the pains to draw water meerly to pour it back into the place whence he had it? or will a Gardener when he hath little enough water for his Plants, be so foolish as to spill it purposely on his Gravel VValks? Or is it worthy of God to take care to lay the dust that the Effeminate Fops and Beaus may not be incommoded when they air themselves?

But they that shall make this Objection, do not well understand, nor wisely consider the Nature of things; for what they here upbraid, are special Instances of a wise Providence. I acknowledge that the Sun doth shine, that the Rain doth fall, and that the Wind bloweth in Desarts and Places not Inhabited, as well as in such as are; and it is very probable that these things happen more regularly and seasonably in the one than in the other, because there is not that reason for stopping their regular and seasonable Course there as elsewhere. God’s Care and Providence is not confined to Man, it extendeth to the Beasts which range the Desarts and dwell in the Wilderness, who cannot live and be supplied with necessary Food, unless also they enjoy their proper Seasons. Besides, these places, tho’ they be not at present actually inhabited, they are habitable, and may yet become the residence of Men when other parts are overstock’d; and therefore for that end they must be kept up in a convenient state, which could not be unless they were both duely watered with Rain, and also seasonably

ventilated and purified by Winds. Nay, this is necessary for the good and conveniency of the Neighbouring places which are presently inhabited : for if in those places there were no change of weather, if Wind and Rain were never given them, then the Air would be corrupted, and would have a pernicious Influence upon other parts. Again, Rain is not only useful and necessary to refresh and nourish Plants, but also it serveth to cement the Ground it self, and to prevent the rents and clefts which the scorching heat of the Sun is ready to make in it : therefore God wisely poureth Rain upon the very High Ways, to preserve them passable and convenient for travelling ; for otherwise both the Dust would be insupportable, and also there would be vast Chasms and Gapes, which would stop up the Passage of Travellers, and put an end to all Trade and Commerce. Without Rain it is impossible for either the Care or Wit of Man to preserve the Ground from cleaving asunder and falling inwards, as may be demonstrated from several Instances ; particularly in the Isle of *Cyprus*, there is a certain place which was without Rain, as is reported, for the space of 36 Years, and ever since it has been desolate and altogether uninhabitable, by reason of the prodigious chasms, clefts and rents which so long Drought made in it. This end and use of Rain is pointed at *Job* 37. 13. where it is said, that *He causeth Rain to come, whether for Correction, or for his Land, or for Mercy* ; which sheweth, that the Author of that Book was a Man of great Wisdom, Experience, Observation, and Knowledge of Nature.

Finally, tho' the Sea wants no supply from Men or Humane Industry, and therefore the *carrying Water to the Sea* may well be reckoned amongst them an Emblem and Figure of unnecessary Labour ; yet if the Care and Providence of God did not supply it by Rain and the return of Rivers, even the Sea it self would soon be dried up. But to give a more direct Answer to this part of the Objection, I say, that the falling of Rain into the Sea is so far from weakning our Argument for Providence, that

that it rather confirms it : for first Rain is necessary to dissolve equally the saline Particles, and to keep them from uniting into a crust and subsiding to the bottom, which we may very well conclude they would do, if it was not for the fresh water which is continually poured upon them, and the continual stirring them by the Tides, Winds, and the Motion which Rain makes. We see that Salt will not dissolve without a sufficient quantity of water, and because the fresh water of Rivers cannot spread it self soon enough through the vast Ocean, therefore places distant from the Continent are furnished from above by the dropping down of Rain or the falling of Spouts : And the Motion made by either, serves like the shaking a Bottle to take away all Sediment, and to mix the dissolved Substance equally. Secondly, Rain is without doubt very beneficial to all those Animals with which the Sea abounds, by refreshing and sweetning the Waters. Thirdly, They who use the Sea, know and declare that it grievously stinketh, and becomes very noisom if there be a perfect Calm without Rain, Wind or Storm, but for the space of a Month or Six Weeks : Therefore God sheweth both his Wisdom and Kindness by raining upon the Sea, that the Air of it may be healthful to those who navigate it ; and so what Ignorant Men are apt to censure as foolish and unnecessary, upon due Enquiry will be found instances of a wise Providence. All these Changes either on the Sea or Land are of God, and are acts of Wisdom, but they only appear such to them that are perfect, that is, such as understand and consider.

6. Thus Mankind are daily charged with most visible and sensible Demonstrations of a Providence towards them in the Management and Government of the Material World : But they are so stupid as not to regard them, or to be affected with them. And it is not the Dull unthinking Mob who are only guilty of this stupidity ; nay, the Wisemen and Philosophers, who pretend a Privilege to enhance Wisdom and Understanding ; even they are no less blockish : Folly and want of due Reflection
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are also chargeable upon them, and may be laid at their Door; for neither do they wisely consider whence these things come, nor for what end they are sent. All their Thoughts and Debates are about the Natural and Secondary Causes of Wind, Rain, Snow, Hail, &c. of which as yet they have never come to any tolerable certainty: but they both put upon others and delude themselves with Dreams, fanciful Conjectures, and groundless Hypotheses, which tho' admitted, neither satisfy nor clear the matter. The guesses of Children, setting aside their childish Expressions, are as reasonable and probable as those of some who set up for and bear the Name of Philosophers. And yet so fond are they of these their Concoits, and so hot in the pursuit of them, that they neglect the wise management of these Natural Causes and their Effects, neither consider the ends and reasons of their particular Determination, which is the main thing to be considered. This is, as if a people when some important Message or Declaration of their King is sent unto them, would form themselves into Cabals, and make Enquiry into the Name and Quality of his Secretary, the Persons who Printed or Published it, and who are employed in dispersing it, without entertaining one wise Thought about the Design or Important Matter contained in it. And because these Learned Men do not wisely consider the Works of God, nor judiciously enquire after the operation of his Hands, therefore he baffles their curious Enquiries, and disappoints their vain Attempts to know how, and by what means his Power worketh. The most obvious things are concealed from them, and their reasonings are but a *darkening of Counsel without Knowledge*, as God said of Job's Discourses, which yet are much wiser and much more satisfying than those of either our Modern or more Ancient Philosophers of whatever Sect. Blind men talk almost as reasonably and justly of the nature of Colours, and of the manner how we come to distinguish them, and they do certainly see as far into a Millstone for discerning the union and cohesion

sion of its Parts. Tho' Matter and Body be gross and palpable, and continually under their senses, yet they are not agreed about the essence of it. *Cartesius* and his Disciples did hold that it consisted in Extension, and therefore they made Matter and Extension equivalent, and did insult over those who denied it, as if they wanted true and clear Ideas: But now, if Mr. *Newton's* Principles be received, the clear Ideas of these confident Gentlemen are false, because a *Vacuum* is demonstrable. How long has the Nature of gravity been debated, and the cause of the tendency of all Bodies to their Center? but there was never much sense spoken on that head, till now that the same Learned Mathematician has resolved it into a particular determination of the Almighty; because it doth not belong to the Essence of Matter, neither is it the Effect of any Property in Matter. They talk so confidently and positively, as if they had demonstration for all they say: But upon examination, it is found that all their Systems are built upon mere precarious Hypotheses, which can never be proved. They are still searching after the hidden causes of things, but with that success, that we may apply to them, what *St. Paul* saith of some Women, *who are ever learning, but never come to the knowledge of the truth.* Like the Authors of the old Romances, who could not extricate their Knights from their difficulties, but by Magick and Enchantment; so they cannot solve the Phænomena of Nature, but by the Interposition of some fanciful Supposition, as the *particulæ striatæ*, and other *Elements* of *Cartesius*. The Wisdom of Philosophers lies mostly in their own Conceit; they think that they know much, but they know little, and their knowledge is still less, the more they trust their own understandings, and the less they consider Matters of Fact, and the wise contrivance and adjustment of them, which is both the chief thing to be known, and all that we are capable to understand: for Enquiries how things were made and are transacted, are Excursions beyond our Line, and attempts to know what we cannot comprehend, of which
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one may talk just with as equal certainty, as of the Inhabitants of the Moon and Stars, their Nature, Customs, and form of Government. What certain Answer can be given to the Questions in the 37th. and following Chapters of *Job*? Who can tell what makes Frost, or give a solid Reason how Water comes to be congealed into the hardness of a Stone? How are Waters bound up into Clouds? and how again these fleeces are squeezed into convenient drops of Rain, that they may refresh and not destroy the tender Plants? What shuts the Sluces of the Clouds; or hinders them from being emptied all at once? Why is the Torrid Zone free of Rain when yet it is certain that Vapours do arise there in greater quantity than in the other Zones? or how comes it that the Ground there endures without Rain, when here and in other places, where the heat is nothing in comparison, the Earth rents, cleaves asunder, and falls into chinks, if it be not watered frequently? Why, or how are these prodigious Mountains of Ice and Snow kept undissolved about the Poles, even in Summer time, when it is certain that the Sun may by its continuance for Six Months, produce there a heat of an equal degree to that betwixt the Tropicks? for the obliquity of the Rays is compensated by their uninterrupted continuance for so long a time: even as common Experience sheweth, that a small fire constantly applied will make a Pot boil as strongly; tho' not so soon as a great fire doth. Our heat in Summer is only occasioned by the length of our days, and therefore we may conclude, that the heat there must be vastly greater; where there is no interruption of Night at all, but Days of one, two, three, four, five and six Months. What preserves the Treasures of Snow and Hail in the upper Regions nearest the Sun? or how comes Hail, which is formed by Frost, to fall in Summer rather than Winter? Who can explain Thunder and Lightning, whose force is terrible, and whose effects are various, which bringeth down the strongest Towers sooner than Bombs, and killeth more suddenly than

than Gunpowder ; which wreatheth the tallest Cedars and great Oaks like a Rope, and which dissolveth the hardest Metal ; which drinketh up the Liquor without spoiling the Cask, and consumeth the Bones, without disfiguring the Skin, and at other times, only singeth the Hair, leaving both Bones and Flesh entire.

These are some of the common and ordinary Works of God, and yet our Philosophers can give but a slender account of them ; a Shepherd, Labourer, or a common Mariner doth understand them even as well as they. The Pride of Man pusheth him to search as if Omnipotence could do nothing which he could not comprehend ; and therefore God setteth a Seal upon his Works, which the wit and contrivance of Man cannot break, and without which there is no penetration into the inward Springs of Nature and natural things : which God doth not, because he envieth Man's Knowledge ; but because he would punish and humble their Pride, and will not give encouragement to a vain Curiosity, which does not aim at his Glory, and which diverteth from the Consideration of what is Necessary and Useful, *viz.* The Ends and Reasons why God doth these Works amongst Men, which are designed to be continued Proofs of his Existence and Providence. If these ends were seriously studied and duely regarded, our Enquiries would please God, procure his guidance and assistance, and would contribute more to the discovery of Nature, than all the Hypotheses which Philosophers lay down : for the best way to know and understand the Nature of things, is to consider the Ends and Uses to which they are appointed, and for which they serve. Wherefore *Cartesius* spoke most unlike a Philosopher, when he slighted the consideration of final Causes, and said that it was not the part of a Philosopher to enquire into the Ends of the Author of Nature.

I am sensible that I have made a little Digression, to which I have been carried by a Zeal against the fatal inconsideration of the generality of those who are accounted

counted wise, and against that faucy Presumption which makes Men affect to explain all things without any respect to the Power, Prefence or Conduct of God; to punish which *their hearts are made fat, their Eyes heavy, and their Ears are shut, lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Hearts.* My design is not to discredit true Philosophy, nor to represent the Study of Nature vain or unlawful. I esteem it not only Innocent, but Noble and Excellent, as serving very much both to enlarge and enrich the Mind; nay, I consider it as every one's Duty more or less: for God *hath made his Works to be remembred.* He hath set them before us purposely to be considered, that by a due Contemplation of them, we may come to know and understand him aright. As Schemes and Figures are necessary to the right taking up and conceiving of some abstract Speculations; even so we cannot have a true perfect and firm Idea of God, whose Essence is Invisible, whose Nature and Perfections are Spiritual, without viewing and contemplating his Works and Actions in the Material World. And if we do view and contemplate this World seriously, we shall soon be convinced, not only of his Existence, Power and Wisdom; but also that he has not retired and shut himself up within the Clouds; that he is actually present amongst Men, and considereth all that they do; and that he is not an Idle Spectator, but always ready to reward and punish, according as Men deserve.

7. And as this, in my judgment, has been made out evidently by what may be daily observed in the Management of the Weather and Seasons, Wind, Rain, &c. so it will further appear, if we do take into our Consideration some extraordinary Transactions which happen now and then, as an unusual Darkness for some Days, the swelling of Rivers without Rain, their falling off and leaving their Chanel dry, strange Apparitions of flaming Swords, Armies and Horsemen in the Air, like those mentioned, 2 *Macchabees, ch. 5.* and by *Josephus* at

at the Siege of *Jerusalem*, and all manner of Prodigies which are either remarkable and exemplary Judgments, or Signs and Warnings of what will come if not carefully prevented. The truth of the matter of Fact is not denied by those who most oppose the Inferences deduced from it: 'Tis true, many false Stories have been published, but all cannot be reputed such unless we give the Lye to the most credible Authors, and to the most candid Histories. And if the matter of Fact be admitted, we cannot without the greatest Violence to our Reason, reckon it an Effect of pure Mechanism or of any certain immutable Law of Nature; but must ascribe it to the Arbitrary Interposition of the Almighty and most Wise God, if we consider either these preternatural and supernatural Accidents in themselves, or the juncture of Circumstances in which they happen, which ought not to be slighted. I know that the Observation of these Prodigies has been very much abused, to encourage and serve the ends of Superstition; as great and uncharitable Mistakes have been committed in the Interpretation and Application of them: But this Error ought not to be cured by teaching to despise these Wonders and Terrours of the Lord. Dr. *Spencer* was guilty of an ἀμετρία ἢ ἀνβολή here, he runneth from one extream to another: But though he seems to have had all Inclinations to destroy the System of Prodigies, yet such is the force of Truth, that he both acknowledges, that there are such things, and that they are design'd Proofs of the Being, Greatness and Providence of God. See his *Treatise of Prodigies*, Chap. 2. Sect. 8. When God is highly displeased with a People, he sometimes strikes them with Terrour, and makes their hearts to faint and fail them; and nothing can do this more effectually than surprizing Wonders in the Heavens and in the Earth, sudden, unusual, and inexplicable Alterations in the state of Nature, and such like. This was the Method of God's Providence towards the Jewish Nation, and it is evident from Scripture, That that Nation was raised as for other

other reasons, so to be a kind of publick Sign or Example to direct the rest of the World how to receive and interpret all Occurrences: Not only *what was written aforetime*, but what was done to them was intended for *our Learning*; so that when the same or the like things happen, they are to be considered with a respect to the same ends, good or evil, which were pointed at by their Inspired Prophets; but we will not insist upon this at present.

To conclude this Essay, I say, when all things are duly considered, if all the concurring Circumstances of either the common or extraordinary Motions and Transactions of the material World be seriously and carefully examined, we must acknowledge, that they are not necessary Effects of any unalterable Laws established at first, but clear Instances of the wise and watchful Providence of God, who doth whatsoever he pleaseth in Heaven and in Earth, and who manageth the course of all natural things, and the Operation of the most natural causes, so as that it may most evidently appear, That he has not abdicated his Sovereign Power and Authority over the Works of his Hands, but is still in the actual exercise of it, that his rational Creatures may learn to fear, honour, love and obey him.

ESSAY IV.

Of the Manifestation of Providence in the Intellectual World, particularly amongst Mankind.

1. **T**HE further one advanceth into any Kingdom, and the nearer he approacheth the Person and Residence of the King, the more he perceiveth his Magnificence and Grandeur, his Policy and Government. So it is reasonable to expect greater and clearer manifestations of a Divine Providence in the Intellectual, than in
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the Material World. For tho' in strictness of speech, the one is not nearer unto God than the other, because in respect of his Essence and Power he is equally present to both; yet Intelligent Beings, and Creatures endued with reason, may be said to be nearer than those that are brutish and without all understanding, because of their greater affinity to the Nature of God, and their being capable to make an actual acknowledgment of him, to receive Rules and Instructions from him, and to pay active obedience unto him. And as upon this account, it may be very well supposed that God will shew himself amongst his reasonable Creatures more than amongst others, that is, by greater and more particular acts of Wisdom, Goodness and Justice, &c. So seeing all that are Reasonable, are also free Agents; therefore the Government of them will be more for the Glory of God, even as there is more Praise and Honour due to him that ruleth well a vast Army or a populous Kingdom, than to him who only manageth a Machine, or who attendeth a Flock of Sheep, which are altogether passive, and which are not capable to make any resistance.

2. And as the Intellectual World is a most proper subject for the exercise of the divine Care and Providence; so it is an Empire as vast and large at least as the Material, whose Extent is so prodigious that it cannot be measured, nay, it is beyond the reach of Imagination it self, as we have shewed elsewhere, and as any may easily conceive who considereth the innumerable multitude of the Stars, their incomprehensible bulk and distances. For the Intellectual World comprehendeth not only all Mankind that now are, but all that have been from the beginning, and all that shall be hereafter to the end of the World; for not only things present and actually existing, but also future things fall within the Inspection of the Divine Providence, and it is impossible to understand the acts thereof, without a reference to the one and other. Besides, the Intellectual World extendeth further than to Mankind it self, even thus largely
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considered; for it taketh in all other Intelligent Beings whatsoever and wheresoever, the Number and Kinds of which we do not know.

The Scripture plainly declareth the existence of innumerable Spirits both good and bad: It telleth of many Myriads of Angels or good Spirits, distinguished into several orders, who always attend the Throne of God, and wait to receive his Commands which they execute most readily and punctually; It also speaketh of Legions of Devils and Evil Spirits, who are strongly bent upon Mischief, but who cannot perpetrate any without permission from God. And what the Scripture thus declareth, is confirmed by unquestionable Passages in the Histories of all Ages and all Countries, which shew that both good and bad Spirits have appeared unto Men, and left undoubted marks and effects of their appearance behind them to prevent the Suspicion of Fancy or Melancholy.

Moreover, it is neither unreasonable nor improbable to think that all the Planets are inhabited by Intelligent Beings, and also all the other Celestial Globes with the divers Orbs which are enlightned by them: for tho' the Stars are a great Ornament to this Habitation of ours, and of considerable use too, for directing such as sail the deep, for knowing the Figure and Position of the Earth, and the distances of places upon it, and for calculating and rightly adjusting time; yet how can it be imagined that this is the only or chief design of so many prodigious Bodies? The most of them are many thousand times bigger than this Terraqueous Globe, and therefore it is not to be supposed that they were contrived only or mainly to garnish and beautify the surrounding Roof of the Firmament, to render it more agreeable and delightful to the sight; nor do any of these advantages which Men draw from what are visible answer their greatness. And then too, there are an innumerable multitude which are not visible to the Naked Eye, and by consequence design'd for something else than us: So besides

besides the *Four Satellites* of *Jupiter*, and the *Five* which move about *Saturn*, there is the *Via Lactea*, or *Milky Way* (as it is commonly called) which is that bright Circle which passeth through the Orb of the fixt Stars, and as 'twere divideth the Heavens into two Hemispheres; this by the means of Telescopes, is found to come from a multitude of Stars, at a much remoter distance than those we see, and by reason of which distance it is that their Rays stop so much short of us, or approach us with so little force: From whence we may very reasonably conclude, that they have but a small Influence upon this our Orb, and must have been made for some other end.

We should not be so presumptuous as to set limits to the Creation. It savours of Arrogance to determine positively how far omnipotent Wisdom was pleased to exert it self: And it is only our Pride and Vanity which makes us saucily confine the Universe to this Lower World; that is, to our selves, and think that there was nothing made but with a particular Respect unto us. Though it hath pleased the Goodness of our Maker to advance us above all his Works here upon Earth, and to honour us with as great Marks of his Favour, as even the highest Ranks of Creatures are capable of, and which may be a sufficient Matter of Admiration to the best and most glorious Spirits: Yet there is no reason why we should fantasie our selves God's Master-piece. We are still by Nature lower than the Angels, and there may be many other Beings besides indued with Understanding and Reason, and who may have Wisdom and Knowledge bestowed on them in different Measures and Degrees. God hath shewed his Wisdom and Power by a most wonderful Diversity of Beings from the lowest to the highest Degree: As was formerly observed, what a strange Variety is there of Matter it self? How many Thousand kinds are there of Vegetatives? The several Species of Animals cannot be exactly reckoned, because they are not all known, but the number of what is

known is very great: Insects, creeping things, Beasts, Fowls and Fishes, do all partake of the Animal Life; but all of them have it not in the same perfect degree, for they wonderfully differ from each other. How many various degrees of Life, Sense, and we may add even of Reason too, are there betwixt Man, who possesseth them in the highest measure here, and the Earth-worm or Oyster, which seem to have them in the lowest; and as there are almost infinite degrees of Perfection below Man, so there may be infinite degrees above him. Abstracting from Revelation even Reason will not allow us to think that Man is the highest expression of divine Wisdom and Power, or that the Earth is the only Habitation of Intelligent Beings; It is more than probable, That as every part of the Universe is filled with Instances of Power and Wisdom, so that there are dispersed every where Beings capable to understand and acknowledge the same, who may wonderfully differ from one another, and all of them from us, as being either altogether without corporeal Vehicles, or having Bodies of very different Natures and Constitutions, and Souls of larger Capacities.

The Infinite Love and Kindness which God hath shewed to Mankind, was not from any necessity he had of them; or because they only are capable to contemplate his Works, and to make due Acknowledgments of those Perfections which he has manifested in and by them: But as the Love of God is wonderfully great, and free from all prior Obligations, and from all regard to concomitant Advantages; So it is in this very surprizing, and highly to be magnified not only by us, but by all Intelligent Beings, that there should be such regard had to us, when we are but so small a part of his Creation, and in all appearance, do bear much the same Proportion to other Intelligent and Rational Creatures, as what the Globe we dwell in doth to the whole material World, which is less than the Fraction of the Thousandth part of an Unity to an Infinite number, or
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than the smallest Atome to the whole Body of the Earth or Sun. And I am very much inclin'd to believe, that the Psalmist was possessed with such thoughts, when he broke out into that Rapture of Admiration of God's large Bounty to Man, upon his Contemplation of the Heavens and Celestial Orbs: *When I consider thy Heavens, the Work of thy Fingers, the Moon and Stars which thou hast ordained; what is Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou visitest him?* Psal. 8 3, 4. For if he had not believed those innumerable Globes above inhabited by other Rational and Intelligent Beings, he would not have found so much reason to be transported with God's Kindness to Man by the Sight and Consideration of them: Because supposing them only vast and desolate places, meer Heaps and Masses of Brute and Insensible Matter, Mankind is of more value than they, let them be never so prodigiously great.

Thus it appears how vastly large the Empire of the Intellectual World may be: But how far soever it be extended, yet it cannot be too great for the Management of Infinite Power and Wisdom, which can never be Incumbred by Number, Diversity, or Distances.

3. As in the material World there is an admirable Harmony, the distinct Globes are made mutually useful, so that the Motions of one cannot be well explain'd but with a respect to the Motion and Situation of others; so we may very reasonably conjecture, that the Infinite Wisdom of God hath established also in the Intellectual World an Order and Harmony, such Relation, Connexion and Communication amongst all Intelligent Beings, as that what is transacted amongst one sort may have a Reference to another. If we admit the Information of sacred Scripture, both good and bad Spirits do often intermeddle with humane affairs, they join men Invisibly, and perform at the Command or Permission of God, things of considerable Importance in reference both to the publick and private Persons, though we be not sensible of what they do. In the Book of

Daniel we read of Angels, Guardians, and Overseers of particular Kingdoms, who charge themselves with the care of them; and in other places there is mention of Angels set about private and particular Persons. And as the Scripture informs us, That Mankind receiveth benefit by the Ministry of Angels, so we learn from it, that even they do receive Instructions from what happens amongst men, and do draw from the Transactions of this lower World, Matter for their Sublimest Speculation. *St. Peter* speaking of the Mysteries of Man's Redemption, saith, *Which things the Angels desire to look into*, 1 Pet. 1. 12. and *St. Paul* intimateth, That they are made wise by the Transactions of the Church, *to the Intent*, saith he, *that now unto the Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places, might be known by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God*. Eph. 3. 10. God can do whatsoever he pleaseth in Heaven and in Earth, and in all other places, not only irresistibly, but lawfully or justly, because he hath an absolute Dominion over all creatures; and it hath pleased him so wisely to dispose of all his Creatures, and so to rule those whom he hath created free and reasonable, that each may contribute to the good of another, and all of them together advance the ends for which he created them severally. And did we know what Communication is betwixt the several Species of Rational and Intelligent Beings, what References are amongst them, and how much one may be the occasion of what passeth amongst the other, it would admirably clear many Passages of Providence which at present are obscure, mysterious, and altogether unintelligible. For things which are interwoven with other things cannot be well perceived, or fully understood by viewing each singly and apart; but by considering them altogether, as they have a mutual respect and reference to each other: Thus to give the Reasons of the Government of any State, and to shew the Wisdom of its Policy, one must know not only the Condition of the Place, and the Temper of the Inhabitants, but also their Neighbours, with their

their Circumstances too, and what Advantages may be drawn from them, or Disadvantages feared; the Consideration of which can only justify their Alliances, which is the Occasion of important Changes and Comotions, as often as the Internal and Separate Interest of the State it self. And if one was to explain the Oeconomy of the material World, and the wise Contrivance of its Composition, it could not be done without considering the whole Frame and the intermixed Interest of each part: As for Instance, the wise Contrivance of the Magnitude and Situation of the Sun can only be shewed by unfolding the Nature of the other Planets; for seeing they have no Light nor Heat but what they receive from the Sun, it was necessary to contrive it so many Thousand times greater than the Planets, and to place it in the Center, that by this means each of them might be duely illuminated and warmed.

4. But this Knowledge of the Order, Harmony, Relation and Dependency established amongst Intelligent Beings, so necessary to clear many Instances of divine Providence in the intellectual World, is not to be hoped for, at least in this Life. We know little of the Material World, except that small part of it which is Inhabited by Mankind; and we can know less of the Intellectual, which is Invisible, and as much removed from the Eyes of our Mind as from those of our Body. There can be no Telescopes or Instruments sufficient to convey our sight thither, and to make us capable of taking Observations. Our Reason without the Guidance of Revelation can make no Discoveries there; and there is no Revelation yet given full enough to satisfy all the Demands which a Curious Enquirer may make: Though the Scripture be admitted, it doth not light us very far into the Intellectual World; it only unfolds some Important things which concern Mankind, but doth not offer to discover the other parts of this Rational World. Wherefore no certain Accounts can be given of it, and all Attempts towards it, are vain and presumptuous Conjectures,

of less Credit than the Geography of the Moon, if I may be allowed to speak so improperly. However, this needs not discourage the making Observations of a divine Providence, nor the searching for Proofs of it amongst Mankind; for though we do not know, neither can know what other Intelligent Beings there are, nor how far they and we are involved together, so as to clear the Methods and Measures of Providence in this Respect; yet Mankind considered by it self, and taken separately from all other Intelligent Beings, doth afford very remarkable and demonstrative Proofs of a Providence: For it is in the Intellectual as in the Material World, where the Wisdom and Power of God is visible not only in the Order, Harmony, and Composition of the whole Frame; but in the Formation of every single part. If we cannot reach the divine Wisdom in Reference to other parts of this large Empire of the Intellectual World, yet we may clearly discern it in the Conduct of our selves, as we may shew the Wisdom and Policy of a State in respect of its own proper Subjects, without considering its Interest and Alliance with either neighbouring or remoter States.

5. Leaving therefore the Intricacies of Providence, which concern other parts of the Intellectual World, let us confine our thoughts to Mankind alone, and search out the Instances of Providence which are to be found there: And indeed, here there are so many, that one hardly knoweth where to begin, or how to make an end. To proceed the more orderly, I will follow the Method of Providence it self in some measure, I will begin where it did, and trace it in some perspicuous Instances, for preserving and promoting the common peace and welfare of Mankind.

First, then let it be considered how admirably Mankind and this Lower World are contrived and fitted for one another. We may suppose, either that Man was created chiefly on the Account of this World, or that all these things were made chiefly for his sake. As up-
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on the Discovery of some rich fertile Island or part of the Continent, Colonies usually are sent forth, and Persons sought out proper to cultivate the same, and to gather the profits of it: So we may think, That God made Man chiefly for the Sake of the World and what is in it, because he would not have it to lie wast and desolate, and because he would have some to view and consider his works, and to improve their Vertues and Powers to all the ends and uses of which they are capable. This World is as 'twere God's Plantation, and Man was design'd to labour it, and to return the Advantages which it yields: To serve and promote which Design, Man is suitably qualified, being indued with an understanding Mind, an inquisitive Soul, a quick and fertile Invention, a wonderful Memory, a profound Judgment and Reason, which can collect and compare things, and draw Inferences from them. Upon this Account, Man answers the Design, I mean he is capable to pursue it, he is qualified to discern the Works of God, and to acknowledge the Wisdom, Power, and Contrivance which is so conspicuous in them. Nay, there is none other, at least in this lower World, capable of this: And therefore without Man, this World had been defective and uncomplete. It would have been as useless as a Magnificent Palace in a Desert; for Beasts can neither perceive the Art of Men, nor admire and understand the Power and Wisdom of God. To what purpose the Glory and Magnificence of the Heavens and starry Firmament, or the diversified Beauty of the Earth, if there had not been one to contemplate them? For what end so much plenty of Corn and Grass, such abundance of all sorts of Trees and Fruits, such Variety of Herbs of different Vertues, if there had not been an understanding and skillful Person to gather them, and to employ them to their proper uses? Why so much Treasure and Riches laid up in the Bowels of the Earth, if not one to draw it out? In a word, what should all the World have signified, if there had been wanting a reasonable
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Creature to explain the Sense and Meaning, to declare the Nature, Properties, and Uses of things? Wherefore Man considered with a respect to this lower World, is a lasting and sensible Demonstration of a wise God and Providence: The Wisdom of God appears in the first Contrivance of Man, and his Providence by the continuing Man in the World, which without him would be as a desolated Island, which yieldeth no Advantage or Profit.

Nor doth the Wisdom and Providence of this God appear less, when we consider Man as the chief Design, and all other things made with a Reference to him. If this World was reared up chiefly for Man's use, to be an Habitation and Place of aboad for him, who is composed both of Body and Soul, it cannot be conceived how Wisdom, or Power, or Goodness, could have contrived it better, or made it more convenient. Therefore *Alphonso IV.* King of *Arragon*, as he blasphemed the Power and Wisdom of God, so he bewrayed his own ignorance when he said, That if he had been called to the divine Council, at the making of the World, he could have contrived it better. For making the whole Earth habitable, what better Contrivance than its oval Figure, the making its Axis shorter than the Diameter of its Equator, the giving it a diurnal Motion about its own Axis, and an Annual Motion about the Sun in an Ellipsis, but with all keeping its Axis still parallel to its self, and at oblique Angles with the Plan of its Orb? For by this means, all parts of the Earth, except what lies about the Poles, are supplied daily with Light and Heat, necessary to Life and the things of Life; a wonderful Variety of Climates are produced, and different Seasons which give both Delight and Profit; such places as are nearest the Sun, or most exposed to its Heat by reason that the Rays fall upon them directly, as those upon the Equator and betwixt the Tropicks are preserved from being burnt up, because by the diurnal Motion of the Earth the Nights there are equal to the Day, or almost as long;
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and such as are at a greater distance, as what lies without the Tropicks on either side, on which the Rays of Light and Heat fall obliquely only, they have this distance and Inconvenience compensated by the length of their Days and Summers. The Surface of the Earth almost every-where is made proper and pleasant for Residence, and richly furnished with all things necessary and useful; there is nothing wanting which is desirable, either for the support or comfort of Life; there is plenty of all things for satisfying either the Senses of the Body, or the Faculties of the Soul; Diversity of Objects to delight the Eye, harmonious Sounds and melodious Voices to gratifie the Ear, and Variety of Meats and Drinks to please the Taste; there is store of all Materials to build, either for Profit, Pleasure, or Magnificence; there is abundance of all sorts of Furniture, wherewith to make clothing either for Use or Ornament; sufficient Provisions for enduring the Severity of Winter and the scorching Heat of Summer: The Land abounds with Corn-fields, pleasant Pasturage, delightful Woods, Gardens and Orchards; the Sea is a large Pond for Fishes, and the Lakes are lesser ones; the Air is a vast Aviary, which puts none to expence; Herbs for Food, and Physick grow upon the Mountains and in the Valleys, and here and there do spring up admirable Medicinal Waters both for drinking and bathing, to restore and preserve Health; in the glorious arched Roof there are suspended two most beautiful and well adjusted Clocks for the universal use of Mankind, that by the distinguishing of times they may the better regulate their Affairs: And under the Pavement of the Earth, Wealth, Riches, and all precious things are treasured: Seas and Rivers are intermingled with the Land, for the more easie transporting what is desirable from distant Places; and there are Horses, Asses, and other Beasts of Burden to make travelling by Land convenient.

In a word, there is all matter of Happiness within the reach of Labour and Industry, which is necessary for
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exercising the Intellectual Faculties, and to give Satisfaction to the mind, which is never so well pleased as when it useth its reason, and which always takes most Delight in the things which it self hath wrought. If the Necessaries and Comforts of Man's Life had been scattered above-ground, and as easily come by as the Food of other Animals, the distance betwixt Man and these Animals could not be well kept up; the Dignity of the humane Nature could hardly be preserved: For unless Reason be used, a rusty Dullness doth o'erspread it; the Intellectual Faculties turn restive, unless continually employed. The Soul and Spirit of Man is nourished and perfected by Exercise, but degenerates and dies, when it is idle and has no Occasion of employing its thoughts. Wherefore it was and is wisely provided, to set the Necessaries, the Comforts and Conveniences of Life at some distance from Laziness and Sloth, and to hedge them about with some Difficulties, that while we search for them, and labour for the things of the Body; we may at the same time, and by the same means, improve our Intellectual Faculties, and carry on the growth and perfection of our Souls, which were created for nobler ends than eating and drinking, and other Acts of the Animal Life: For being they are more perfect than meer Animals, certainly they must be design'd for some higher State, otherwise it must be said, that they were created to be miserable, which is inconsistent with the Goodness of God; for every thing is miserable which cannot have what it aspires after and is capable of. The desires of the Soul go beyond the Animal Life, its Capacity is larger than to be filled up with finite Objects; and as there is no other infinite besides God, so it is evident, that God himself can only satisfy the Soul, by communicating to it the Knowledge of his infinite Nature and Attributes, which he hath done liberally enough in and by his manifold Works, which being sincerely owned and acknowledged, should have procured greater Measures and Discoveries than what can be had by the
simple

simple Contemplation of these outward material works, which were mainly designed to prepare us for more perfect and more spiritual Illuminations: And that we might have this necessary Preparation to a more perfect State, by the Exercise of our Rational Faculties and the Knowledge of these visible Works of God, therefore the Necessaries and Comforts of this present State are so disposed of as that we cannot readily obtain them without labour and a diligent use of our Reason, and a careful Observation of those various things wherewith this World abounds. Thus, if we consider Man as the chief Design of this lower World, upon whose account it was made, the Wisdom of God eminently appears in adapting all things to his Nature and Constitution, and so ordering the things of the Body, as that they might be useful to the Mind: For Man is not as other Animals, only Matter curiously and admirably organized and actuated by something (we do not know what) which wonderfully indeed promoteth the Design of the Machine, but which aims at nothing else, and is incapable of Spiritual Delights and Gratifications. Whereas he is indued with a true Rational Mind, he has a divine and noble Soul strictly and inseparably united to the Body, which cannot be satisfied with the Acts of a brutish and sensual Life, but is still aspiring after higher degrees of Reason and Knowledge. It was therefore necessary so to contrive the Necessaries, Conveniences, and Comforts of the Body, as that they might administer Pleasure, Profit, and Satisfaction to the Soul, otherwise both the purchasing and Enjoyment of them would have been very uneasy to the Soul, would have created it pain and trouble; and as this Contrivance demonstrates the Wisdom of God, so the keeping things in this State, shews his wise and watchful Providence, which always consults the good of Mankind; and if some of them abuse or pervert this wise Contrivance of things, the Fault is wholly their own, neither the Wisdom nor Providence of God ought to be impeached for it.

6. A Second Instance of the divine Wisdom and Providence shall be Man's Authority over all other Animals, which was first given at the Creation, then renewed after the Flood, and which is preserved and kept up to this very Day. I need not enlarge upon the Advantages which Mankind hath by the Beasts being subject to them; for every one understandeth them: If but one or two Species of them did revolt and cast off the Yoke they would prove too hard for Man, and would make his Life very uneasie, and there would be no resisting them all. The Fowls of the Air could soon destroy the whole Race of Mankind, if once they should engage in a War against them. What Desolation of Countries would follow, if Lions, Tygers, Bears, Wolves and other Savage Beasts should break loose from their Dens? Sometimes an Insurrection of very Rats and Mice have ruined a People. And God doth sometimes permit the Beasts to insult over Men, to molest and disturb them, that they may be the more sensible of his Wisdom, Power and Goodness in obliging the Beasts generally to be at so much peace with him: For there is no mechanical Account to be given of this; Beasts were not conquered by Man's Strength, nor subdued by his Art and Cunning; they were not reasoned into a League of Servitude out of any Prospect of their own advantage, or from any Sense they had of Man's Merit. Man could have had no lawful or rightful Dominion over the Beasts and other Animals, unless it had been freely bestowed by him who created them; nor could he have kept the Possession of this Dominion, he was not capable of forcing their Obedience and Respect, if God did not maintain and uphold his Authority by the free and secret Effects of his Power, As Man holds the Dominion over these fellow Creatures meerly by God's Grant and Donation; so they pay their Homage of Fear and Obedience only by Virtue of that Decree, *And the Fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every Beast of the Earth, and upon every Fowl of the Air, upon all that moveth upon the Earth, and upon all the*
Fishes

Fishes of the Sea into your hands are they delivered, Gen. 9. 2. if this Decree hath not now an universal and uninterrupted Effect; if now and then, here and there, some Instances may be given of Beasts, revolting and casting off the Fear and Dread of Man, it is not to be wondred at; seeing Man himself has turned aside from his Duty and Allegiance to God: For God did not design Man to be an absolute and independent Lord, when he resign'd to Man the Right and Dominion over his Works, he reserved to himself a Sovereign Power and Authority over both; so that Man was only constituted as 'twere God's Deputy and Lieutenant, who was to be accountable to God, and who was to be respected and obeyed only upon the account of God's Will and Authority, who is the absolute Sovereign of Heaven and Earth. As therefore a King may lawfully recall the Commissions of Power and Jurisdiction which he hath given to particular Persons when he is informed that they are abused; or may issue out Orders to limit the Obedience of his Subjects in reference to those whom he hath deputed over them, when he understands that they are not so faithful as he expected: So God doth only exert his Sovereign Right and Authority, when he dispenseth with the Subjection of some Beasts towards rebellious and ungrateful Man, or commandeth some of them now and then to pay no regard to him. But because 'twould tend to the utter Destruction of Mankind, if this Yoke of Subjection which was laid at first upon Beasts should be entirely broken, and if the Fear and Dread of Man should be wholly removed; therefore it is the good Will and Pleasure of God to continue it in a very great measure; and there can be no other natural reason or cause assign'd for the Authority and Ascendency which Man hath over Beasts and other Creatures, but only God's free Will and Pleasure, which his wise and active Providence causeth to be observed. If this Providence did not interpose, and strike an awe and terrour into the Beasts, not only the fiercer kind should run upon us, and tear us with Fury; but

but even the tamer sort should push and kick at us, and trample us under their Feet.

7. A Third Instance of the divine Care and Providence is the Production of both Sexes in a Number suitably proportioned to each other. One dare not be positive whether the Number of Men and Women is perfectly equal, nor is it easie to determine the difference, if there is any. Some think there are more Men, considering what multitude of Men are employed in the Wars, in Navigation, in working of Mines and other uses and exercises to which Women are not admitted: Others imagine there should be more Women born, because being shorter liv'd and more subject to Sicknes, there would be a want of Women if their Number were not greater than that of Men. If the Registers of Births and Burials were exact, one might with some pains, calculate this Matter amongst us: But no Inferences can be made from the Bills of *London*, because the Children of Dissenters are not taken notice of. I had the Curiosity to make Observations in the Parishes under my Care, and do remember to have found 104, or 106 Males born for an 100 Females; but whether this held in other places I know not. I observed also, That taking up the Lists of private Families, there were always more Women than Men; but then this difference may be more than balanced by those who live in Colleges and Universities, and who are abroad following either Trade by Sea or the Wars by Land. But we need not stand upon the Nicety of a precise Calculation, it is sufficient to observe, That the Number of Males and Females is pretty well adjusted, that there is no sensible Disproportion betwixt the Number of Men and Women, so as to make either the one or the other to be uneasily wanted, to the Propagation and Multiplication of Mankind, and to the other Advantages of Life. If there were many more Men than Women, the Race of Mankind could not be well continued, 'twould soon fail and decay: If there were by far fewer Men, then we should lose the Benefit
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of those necessary and useful Employments which require the Strength and Indefatigableness of the Masculine Temper: For though the Generality of Men do very little excel the Generality of Women either in natural or moral Endowments; though Women have as liberal a share, as Men, of Sense, Wit, Memory, Judgment, Invention, Subtlety, and such like Qualifications, and can be as quick and ready with advice on Important Occasions as Men; yet setting aside some few singular Instances, Women have not that Strength of Body, or that Vigour of Mind which Men have, and therefore are not so much fitted for Fatigue, Labour, bold and hardy Enterprizes: It may be said of Women in respect of Men, what is observable of Children or Youth, in Comparison with those of Riper Years, that the one indeed is capable of all things that the other is capable of, except toil of Body and Application of Mind. Besides, it is evident, That God has neither designed Women nor framed either their Bodies or Minds for warlike Exercises, the Dangers and Difficulties of travelling either by Sea or Land, the Labour of Building, the Hardships of Agriculture, nor are they made proper for that Study and Contemplation which is necessary to extract the hidden Treasures of Knowledge, however capable they may be to use them when laid before them. Their delicate Temper requires the softer Province of Domestick business, which they manage more handsomely, and perform with a better Air than Men: To them belongs the Care of Families, the bearing and breeding up of Children, and the contriving and providing what is necessary and requisite to refresh and support Man under the Toil and various Labours of Life. It is therefore necessary for promoting the ends of Life, and for securing the Comforts and Conveniences of it, that the Number of Men and Women be either equal, or very nearly adjusted, as we see they are; for if either of them was disproportioned, 'twould not be so good living in the World: But then how comes this so proper Adjustment;

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whence is it, that Men and Women are equal in Number, or that the Number of one is so well proportioned to the other? This cannot come from Chance, for what is constant and regular must proceed from a better Cause. This is not to be ascrib'd to the Care and Policy of particular States, for they are more concerned about the breeding of Horse and Cattel, than about propagating Mankind; nor doth this happen by the mutual Consent and Agreement of Parents, for Males or Females are not left to their Choice; nor can this be reckoned a necessary Effect of any Order or Law established at first: For seeing some Women bear all Male Children, and others all Females, others part of both, and a great many none at all, it is not conceivable how so equal an Adjustment of the Number of Men and Women could proceed from any Law of blind Nature; and therefore all must be ascribed to the watchful Providence of God, which superintends, amongst other things, the Births and Productions of Mankind, and takes Care that the Number of one Sex be always proportionable to that of the other.

8. But this proves that God superintends the Deaths of Men and Women as well as their Births; for if they did not go out of the World in equal Numbers as they come into it, the Number of the one could not always bear so just and reasonable a proportion to the other. And we may add further, as a Fourth Instance of Providence near a kin to this, which is the adjusting of Deaths to Births, so as that neither the one hinders the Multiplication of Mankind, nor doth the other overstock the World. Notwithstanding the common Mortality of Men, the extraordinary Plagues which now and then happen, the great havock and slaughter occasioned by Wars, and many other Accidents which sweep Multitudes away, yet Mankind is still multiplying: According to Sir *William Petii*'s Calculation, Mankind doubles it self every 360 Years, which is about the Quadruple of one Man's Life, taking 80 or 90 with the Psalmist

Pfalmist for the common Period, so that in the Age of any Man who lives the ordinary term of Life, Mankind encreaseth a Fourth Part. And yet they never grow too numerous, which is prevented by the wise Transplantation of so many out of this World. Particular Persons follow the Swing of their Inclinations without any regard to Posterity or the common good of Mankind; and neither they nor Governments have it ever once under their Deliberation how to balance the Number of Men and Women equally, how to secure a Succession of the humane Race, how to prevent an excessive Multiplication, or how to keep alive so many old Persons as are sufficient for the Education and Instruction of the young: They make no Laws about these things, and indeed 'twould be in vain to do it, for they fall not within the reach of Man's Power or Skill. But now though Man takes no thought of any of these, yet they cannot be better managed, which could never happen without a wise and powerful Cause, that is, without the Superintendency and Interposition of the Almighty and most wise God.

9. Fifthly, Providence wonderfully manifests it self by giving to each Sex, and to every Individual Person of either Sex proper and peculiar Marks for distinguishing them from one another. Any one may easily conceive what great Confusion, and how many bad Consequences would follow, if neither Sex nor Person could be distinguished by an outward Appearance: Even in a state of Innocence Important Mistakes would be unavoidable, if there were a perfect Resemblance amongst all; but in the present State of Degeneracy and Corruption, no Order could be kept, no property secured, no Man's Right preserved if there were no Distinction of Sexes and Persons. And to prevent these many Important Abuses, 'twas also necessary that the distinguishing Characters should be visible, not secret or easily concealed. Now what is so much necessary to the Order, Peace, and common Interest of Mankind God takes a special

Care of, and has so wisely provided it that both Sex and Person may be presently discerned upon shewing the Face and uttering the Voice, one of which at least cannot be shun'd, and generally both are expos'd before any Transaction can be carried on. To this Purpose God hath given to Men Beards, and to Women smooth Chins; and tho' Custom in this part of the World hath brought us to be ashamed of this sign of Manhood, and to be rasing it daily that it may not appear; yet there is no great Occasion for mistaking the Faces of Men and Women: For besides the Beard, the Air and Traits of a Man's Face is so different from a Woman's that no Art almost can alter or disguise them, so that the best painted Beau will appear to be a Man though dressed like a Woman, as the courtest Woman may be easily discerned though cloathed like a Man. And as the Sex is thus discernible by the Face, so by the Voice; for a Man speaks rough and strong, whereas a Woman strikes the Organ of the Ear, by soft, gentle and more charming Notes: Which makes the Voice and Speech of the one and other as easy to be distinguished as Basse and Treble.

But 'twas necessary also to give distinguishing Marks to every particular Person, as well as to each Sex; which accordingly the Wisdom of God hath ordained and his Providence doth constantly observe, to prevent the Mistakes and evil Consequences which would follow if it were otherwise. As a Man's Voice may be easily distinguished from a Woman's, so every Man's Voice and every Woman's Voice may be known; for all of them speak in a different manner: And as to their Faces, there are not two Men or two Women in all the World, so exactly resembling one another, but that some difference may be found for distinguishing them. Sometimes there is such a gross Resemblance, as to occasion mistakes amongst Persons who do not narrowly observe it. And I have known some Twins, and have heard of others, who were so like, that not only Strangers could make no Distinction, but their very near Relations were often deceived:

deceived : But such Instances are very rare, and there is even in them some or other Mark of difference. All which is transacted by the over-ruling Providence of God, for the common good of Mankind, and the private Interest of particular Persons : For if Providence did not imprint these Characters of Distinction, they could not have continued so long, but should wear out.

10. Here perhaps some will object that there is no necessity of the Interposition of Providence, for making the Individuals of Mankind to differ in their Looks and Voices ; for these Differences do naturally and necessarily follow the divers Complexion of Parents, the various Dispositions and other Circumstances of Women in the time of Conception and during their Pregnancy, by which means their Imagination is diversly wrought upon, and that as experience sheweth, has a great Influence both upon the Nature and Visage of the Child : Hence it is that an entire Resemblance is either altogether impossible or very difficult, and what must rarely happen ; so that the Diversity of Faces and Voices may be and are formed without any special Providence. Again, we may perceive the like Diversity, amongst the Individuals of all kinds of Beasts and Fowls ; all Horses, Oxen, and Dogs are not alike, a Shepherd can distinguish his Sheep by the Head and by their bleating, as well as a School-master his Boys, or a Captain his Solders, by their several Countenances and manner of Speech ; and if Fowls did not differ somewhat from one another, how could every one of them know its own Mate and keep by it ? Now it cannot be said that the Imprinting these Characters of Distinction upon Beasts and Fowls, was to avoid Confusion or to secure their Property, and there is as little Reason to say that this was intended by the differences amongst Men : But these differences happening by Chance or otherwise, Men make the best of them and improve them to the common Advantage.

I will begin with the last part of this Objection, and I say first, that there is not so great a Diversity betwixt the Individuals of the several kinds of Beasts and Fowls, as betwixt those of Mankind; because 'twas not so needful: And seeing these Marks of Distinction are wisely assign'd to every Species of Animals, and contrived more or less according as the common Good and Interest of every particular Species required, therefore this cannot be the Effect of blind Chance, but must be ascribed to the careful Management and Superintendency of some wise Agent. Secondly, I say what Diversity is found amongst the Individuals of Beasts and Fowls was necessary both for their own Sakes and ours: Though these Animals range in common without Order or Government, and one cannot pretend to any Property more than another, yet seeing they are a part of Man's Property, it was fit to distinguish them to preserve Order and good Government amongst Men: For an Instance, if all Oxen and Horses were perfectly alike, an honest and modest Owner might be banter'd out of his rightful Possession by the Impudence of a Villain. And as upon our Account 'twas necessary to give them some certain Mark of Distinction; so 'twas most necessary for directing the Dams to their own Young, and the Young to their proper Dams. If there were no difference betwixt the bleating of Sheep or Goats, then the Lambs and Kids could not distinguish their Mothers, nor they them, so that some should suckle too much while others starved. And because Birds are design'd to live in pairs, in a kind of conjugal State, 'twas most requisite to make every one capable of knowing its own Mate, that they might not desert and wander from one another. Now is it reasonable to reject a wise Instance of the Divine Providence towards Mankind, because we discern some like Instance of his wise Care towards Beasts and other Animals? A Native of *Hotentot* may as reasonably conclude upon his being here, that our Houses fell from the Clouds, or did spring out of the Ground without our Art, because Pigeons are

are allotted Dove-coats, Horses and Oxen Stables and Stalls; or he may think that our Children are not educated by our Care and Industry, or according to the Dictates of Reason, because we also take Care of the breeding of Horse and Cattle.

Nor is it more reasonable (which answereth the first part of the Objection) to deny this most useful Distinction of Persons to be the special Effect of divine Providence, because it may also be wrought by the help of second Causes. Is a Painter less to be admired and praised for his fine Stroaks and Diversity of Figures because he useth a Pencil? Since the Work of the Creation was finished, God generally worketh by natural Causes; but all natural Causes are as the Pencil, which without the Guidance, Direction, and Determination of the skillful hand of God, cannot produce any regular Proportion, any handsome Shape or Figure, or any beautiful Perfection. And as we are ignorant how and by what means these peculiar Characters are conveyed which do thus distinguish Persons; so it would seem that they are not the Effects of pure Nature, for Nature inclineth to Similitude rather than to such Diversity. Hence it is, that all of a Nation have not only one Air, which may be thought acquired by Imitation, but also they have some common Traits of Visage which makes them generally known from others: So Strangers perceive a very near and considerable Resemblance amongst Kindred and those who are descended from common Parents, though those who daily converse with them are not sensible of it. Wherefore we may with good Reason conclude, that this wise and useful Diversity of Faces and Voices proceeds not from blind Nature, but is an Effect of the wise Providence of God.

11. And to no other Cause can be referred the no less strange Diversity of Hand-writings which comes properly under this Head. Common Experience shews that though Hundreds and Thousands were taught by one Master, and one and the same Form of Writing, yet they

they should all write differently : Whether Men write a Court or Roman Hand, or any other, there is something peculiar in every ones Writing which distinguisheth it. Some indeed can counterfeit anothers Character and Subscription, but the Instances are rare, nor is it done without Pains and Trouble ; nay, the most expert and skillful cannot write much so exactly like, as that it cannot be known whether it be genuine or counterfeited. And if the Providence of God did not so order it, what Cheats and Forgeries would be daily committed, which would not only juggle private Men out of their Rights, but also unhinge States and Governments, and run all into Confusion. This Diversity of Hand-writings is of mighty great use to the Peace of the World, it prevents Fraud and secures Mens Property, it obligeth the living and present to Honesty and Faithfulness, it importeth the Mind of the absent, and sheweth the Will of the dead which ought to be sacredly observed : And what is so very useful is not the Effect of any humane Concert, Men did not of themselves agree to it ; they are only carried to it by the secret Providence of God, who understandeth and mindeth what is for the Good and Interest both of Mankind in general, and of every particular Person.

12. But Sixthly, The Diversity of the Genius or Spirit of the Soul or inward Man, is as great as that of the Complexion and Properties of the outward Man ; and as convincing an Instance of Divine Providence. For no Philosophy can resolve this, it is altogether unaccountable by humane Reason, and can only be assigned to the wise Providence of God, who ordereth it as most convenient for the common Good, and as being necessary to maintain the Bond of Union and Friendship amongst Men. Philosophers (amongst other curious Enquiries) debate whether there be any specifick difference betwixt one Soul and another ; and the Famous *Cartesius* asserts, That every Man's Soul is not only of the same kind, but alike, that is, one is as capable and perfect as the other : And upon this account, he makes all equal as to their Minds,

Minds, and turneth the visible difference over upon the Frame, Texture and Constitution of the Body. Which is indeed a just Consequence of his Opinion, that makes the Essence of a Soul or Spirit to consist in Cogitation, as that of Matter in Extension: For as every thing extended is Matter according to him, and one piece of Extension cannot be said to be *Matter* more than another whatever difference there be as to their external Modifications; so every thing which thinks must be Soul or Spirit, and perfectly equal to another thing which thinks as to its Essence: For Cogitation admits of no Degrees, one Thought is as much Thought as another, the difference of the Subject makes no difference as to the Essence of a Thought, or of that which thinks; and so all Cogitative or Thinking Beings must be equal, because they partake equally of the Essence and Nature of Souls or Spirits: Which if admitted, it will follow that there are no Spirits superiour to the Soul of Man, as to their Nature. But as to the particular Essence and Substance of Souls, we can determine nothing about it, it is altogether unknown; and there can be nothing more vain or impertinent, than to be peremptory about that, of which we have no manner of Idea, or to debate the Truth and Probability of Opinions and Hypotheses, in a Matter altogether hid and kept secret from us. We are certain that we have Souls, or something within us distinct from our Body; it is as evident as that we think; for Thoughts cannot be the Effect of meer Matter, nor can Matter any ways moved, or artificially modified, be capable of such abstract Ideas, such sublime Speculations, and such vast Desires and Inclinations, as we sensibly perceive in our selves. But whether the difference lies in the intrinsic Constitution or Essence of Souls, or in some superadded Quality; however it happen, the visible Nature, Properties, and Effects shew almost as great a difference betwixt one Man and another, as to degrees of Perfection, as seems to be betwixt, almost other Animals and Men, and Men and Angels. Setting
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aside some few Idiots and natural Fools, all are endued with Reason and Understanding, which is proper to set them in the rank of reasonable Creatures, and consequently all are capable of a Happiness above other Animals, and qualified to pursue that Happiness: But all are not alike perfect, nor are the same kinds of Perfection distributed to every one.

Some precarious Spirits (like early Fruit) are ripe, before others begin to set. Some few are capable of all things, are able to master all Sciences, and nothing is too hard for them: Others have only a Genius for some particular, which they can cultivate admirably. Some are quick at undertaking, and can overcome the first Difficulties easily, but flag in the pursuance: Others (like restive Horses) are hard to work up, but once heated and set a going, they move easily and successfully. Some conceive well, but cannot express themselves clearly: Others have little Invention, but can say well what another has suggested. Some are accurate at reasoning; others powerful at persuading. Some are witty, but not solid or judicious; others are wise without Briskness of Wit. Some have their Wit, Judgment, and Expression ready at all times, and can of a sudden jump into the Exercise of them; others have no such extemporary Gifts, but being allowed some little Premeditation can reason unanswerably, judge exactly, and express themselves almost beyond a Possibility of Correction. Some are altogether for Contemplation; others for Action, and a third sort can partake of both. Some excel in Judgment, others in Memory, and some have both in good Measure. In a Word, great is the Diversity of Spirits; and every Man's Spirit differs somewhat from another's; and that too, even where there seems to be a near Relation and Agreement: For instance, those of a Mechanical Genius, some are for Wood, others for Metal or Stone; some work fine curious small things, others chuse what is gross and bulky: And those who have a Genius for Engraving, Drawing, or Painting; some are for Figures, others History,

History, others Prospective and Landskip, and others Pictures; again, some are happy in framing the Design, others in observing the Proportions, and the Excellency of a Third sort is the Shadows. So that there are remarkable differences amongst those of the same Genius.

Now this Diversity neither follows nor proceeds from the Temperament of the Body, at least it cannot be said to be the total cause of it: For though it may be conceived that a melancholy Constitution renders one a little dull and slow, as the Sanguine may contribute to make another quick and sprightly; yet it is not to be imagined that the Body should, or doth determine to Speculation rather than to Practice, or to this rather than to that, or to one sort of Speculation rather than to another. What can there be in the Body, which favoureth Mathematicks rather than History? Philosophy rather than the Study of Words and Languages? Law rather than Physick? Or to be one of these rather than the other? Why should the Body take more Pleasure in Labour than in Study? And why should one Art and Trade be more acceptable to a particular Constitution than another? Do we not see Men of all Complexions and Constitutions in every Trade, Employment, and Profession; and therefore the Genius and vehement Inclinations to particular Arts, Trades, and Studies, proceed not from the Body, but flow from the Spirit.

Nor do Men derive their Genius and Inclinations from their Parents, for Children do not often resemble their Parents in this Matter, and for the most part are very unlike them. Active Men have soft Sons, and some wise Men are both the Children and Parents of Fools. The Son often disgusteth his Father's Trade which he knoweth to be lucrative, and preferreth another of which he has no Experience. Which also shews that Genius and Inclination is not the Effect of Education, nor inspired by a desire of Gain, Honour, or other outward Advantages, which attend particular Arts and Professions: For while they are yet Children, and consequently free
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of Ambition and Covetousness, the particular Genius of Men doth discover it self; nor can they be diverted from their Inclination, either by Promises or Threatning, by Hardships or Difficulties. A natural Poet lisbeth Verse almost as soon as he begins to spell, always before he know any thing of the Art; when another who hath studied it, cannot force out one tolerable good Line. A mechanical Spirit even at the Age of Three or Four will be continually a whetting Stick; and he who has a Genius for War, cannot be fixed to any other Employment, though he see daily many come from it without Arms and Legs, and only rich in Wounds and Scars. So natural is Mens Genius to particular things, that there is no forcing it; the very Attempt seldom fails to spoil the Person, and to render him good for nothing, which otherwise might have been eminent for something.

Wherefore, all things duely considered, this Diversity of Spirits is immediately from God, who is the sole Author of every good Gift, who indeed giveth to all liberally, and who also giveth to every one only according as he himself thinketh fit. To one he giveth the Spirit of Government and Counsel, to another the Spirit of War, on one he bestows Wisdom and Understanding for discerning Truth, on another an eloquent Tongue for instructing and perswading. He inclines some Men to Meditation and Study, and others he inspires, as *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab*, for curious Works in Wood, Iron, Brass, Silver, Gold, Linen, Wooll, and Silk. The Skill and Discretion of the Husbandman in plowing and ordering his Ground, and sowing his Seed, is from God, as it is declared, *Isa.* 28. 26. and so is all other natural Gifts whatsoever, which he distributes variously, to different Men, in different Measures, that the Glory of them may be given to him: And for this end also he entails no particular Gift or Spirit upon any Tribe, Family, or Order of Men, but scatters every Spirit through all. Hence it is, to humble those of the highest Quality, that they may not think

think themselves better than other Men, he doth sometimes bestow on the Children of them who held the Plough, and on the Men of low Degree, Understanding and Prudence, and Courage, and even Greatness of Spirit, and all other Endowments far above what some of them possessed notwithstanding of the Advantages of their Birth and Breeding.

And as all these things are wrought by the Spirit of God, so by dividing thus severally to every Man as he willeth, he both declares his free and absolute Power, and also shews his wise Providence towards Mankind: For this Diversity of Gifts and Spirits is useful and necessary to the common good, and this Distribution of divers Gifts to divers Men is better and more wise, than if all had been given to every one. If every one had possessed all, and none had a greater Inclination to one thing more than another, then no Art or Science could have been carried on to any Perfection: For the finite Nature of Man, makes him incapable of all things at once, nay he cannot intend and attend well many things at the same time; and his Life being so short, it is not competent for a successive Pursuit. We see that they who have a Genius for different things, are generally inconstant in their Actions, they cannot be fixed to any thing, and are never so useful to themselves or others, as one of an inferior Spirit, whose Inclinations tie them to one particular, which he improves carefully. Moreover, Necessity and Conveniency could not have obliged Men to agree by common Consent upon a Distribution of those Employments and Studies which our Life and present State require, if every one had been capable of all, and no particular Propensity in any: For in that case all would have aimed at the best and noblest things, and none would have humbled himself to mean and servile Offices, which are no less necessary than the other. Or if force can be supposed in such a State of perfect Equality, where there was none more knowing, more prudent, more eloquent, more resolute, or more capable of managing his Designs
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than another, but all alike; then he who had the Misfortune to be over-powered by others, would have pined away his Life in the Sense of his Misery; whereas now Genius and Inclination not only determine Men, and oblige them to apply their Minds to different Practices, but also they cause them to do it freely with Pleasure and Satisfaction. As the natural Body is made beautiful by the Composition of many Members, admirably tempered together, that they may be mutually serviceable; even so, God hath designed to incorporate Mankind into one Body, and to make of them one common Society; and therefore that the Union may be strict and perpetual, he hath most wisely distributed divers Gifts and Qualifications to several Persons, though all of them be either necessary or useful to each individual Man; for by this Means, Love and a friendly Correspondence betwixt all is secured, and the Neglect or Contempt of any is prevented.

Nor doth the manner of this Distribution administer occasion for grudging and envying. Not for grudging and murmuring, because none of these particular Gifts is essential to any particular Person; without these, all possess all that is proper to reasonable Creatures, all that is capable to render them truly happy. For these divers Gifts, now under Consideration, are not necessary to the private and personal State of particular Men, but are only necessary and useful to the common State of Mankind in this World especially. Wherefore as Mankind in common have all Reason, to acknowledge the Bounty and Goodness of God, in bestowing these Gifts upon Men, so no particular Person can justly complain of any Injury done to him, because there is nothing withholden which is necessary to his reasonable Nature, or proper to the Attainment of true Happiness. And as there is no reason to murmur against God, so no place for either Contempt or Envy: For these divers kinds of Gifts, like the several Members of the Body, are all of them useful and necessary, each of them deserves to be cherished,

cherished, and merits Respect; and if there should happen a Contest about the Preference, it could hardly be decided, because there is also some particular Excellency in every one. A Decision of this Affair, if Just, should be in Favour of the most useful; and then perhaps some, which now are first in the common Vogue and Esteem, should be set in the last place.

But to return to the point in hand, that this Diversity of Gifts and Spirits is only from God, and so doth prove his continued Providence. This shall further appear, if we consider how arbitrary the Effusion of these Gifts is, both as to time and place. It is evident, that all Nations are capable of these, none can deny this, seeing every Nation has produced all sorts of Spirits, and Men of every kind of Genius. Now if Genius and Spirit could be propagated; if these flowed from the Temperament and Constitution of the Body, then all Nations should have flourished alike through all the Periods of time; every Nation should have been equally illustrious, in every Age, by the Genius and Spirit of its People. But behold it has happened quite otherwise, for there has been a kind of Circulation of these Gifts and Spirits through the several Nations and People of the World. Sometimes one Nation has been eminent, and sometimes another. At one time we find a Nation and People to have been most flourishing in Valour, and Wit, and Learning, and all manner of Arts and Sciences, and at another time the very same Nation dull and stupid, without Life and Action, with scarce one of Sense and Spirit in it, to manage their Affairs, or to look to their common Interest. *Egypt* was once the Seat of all Wisdom and Learning, whither all (who thirsted after Knowledge) travelled for their Improvement. But he would lose his Labour, who should for this purpose now undertake a Journey thither. Who, from the present State of *Greece*, could ever guess that it had given Birth and Nourishment to so many subtile and sublime Philosophers, to so many excellent and witty Poets, to such

such eloquent Orators, to such judicious Historians, to such wise Politicians, and to Captains of such Valour and Conduct, as ever since have been thought worthy of Imitation? It is not very long ago since *Spain* did dictate to the rest of the World, Sense, and Wit, and good Breeding, and all kinds of Science and Learning! Other Nations traded with them for these things, and fondly bought up what was written by a Spaniard, or translated from the *Spanish* Language. And indeed it appears that their Reputation had a good Foundation; for their Thoughts are generally just and solid, founded upon the Nature of things, and their Wit was not so airy and fanciful, nor lying so much in a turn of meer Words and Phrases, as that of another Nation, whose Spirit has been for some time predominant. But now, by all the accounts we have of *Spain* at present, there is not to be found amongst the Men (whatever be in Libraries) either Traces of ancient Learning, or signs of Modern Improvement, though the Dominions of *Spain* be so large, as that it is said, the Sun doth never set upon them; which shews that their Spirits may have matter enough with which to exercise themselves; yet so much are their Souls now pent up by Ignorance and Dullness, that it would seem they both have quite forgotten the former Days, and are altogether insensible of the present State of the World. It is not yet 300 Years since such a Night of gross Ignorance overspread the World, that the Learning of one now adays, of but two or three Years standing at School should have amazed the Neighbourhood: Which Darknes was dispelled of a sudden by some eminent Lights which God raised up; for by the means of a very few Men, who were indeed wonderful Instances, how far ones Genius may be extended, and how indefatigable his Spirit; I say, by the means of these, and the late useful Invention of Printing, all Arts and Sciences were recovered instantly to a very considerable Height, nay not much inferiour to what it is at this Day, notwithstanding of the Pretences
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of the present above former Ages. For though there be now a greater number of knowing Men, by the spreading of Knowledge, and the multiplying of Books; yet Knowledge it self has not made many more solid Advances, than what was at first about two Centuries ago, when the Aids were not half so many, nay scarce any at all.

To instance in the *Belle Lettre* and Critical Learning, so much in vogue at present, is there any now equal to *Eraſmus*? Who, in a time of great Ignorance, and under great Discouragement, by the mere strength of his own Genius, studied the Ancient both Historians and Poets, retrieved the Knowledge of the Customs, Words, and way of speaking in former Ages, and who arrived at a great Purity of the Latin Tongue, while all about him every where spoke nothing but the grossest Barbarism. Is the Knowledge of Greek and Latin carried further, than what it was by the great *Stephen*, as appears by his two laborious Works, the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, and the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*? What are all the Notes and Illustrations of the Classick Authors, but Transcripts and Compendiums of the first Commentators? And are not the first Translations of the Greek Authors as just as the later ones? Nay these are only the other with some small Amendments. I instance in this kind of Learning, because it seems to have been the first which was restored, and that which set Men upon the search of other Sciences; whence also, without doubt, Instances may be adduced to prove that the first Authors of this last period of Knowledge made more considerable Advances, than those who came afterwards; for the first laboured under great Difficulties without Assistance, whereas the last built upon the Foundation which they laid.

The Progress of Learning was very small and inconsiderable before the Reformation; all the Discoveries before this, were but as the first Dawnings of the Morning, which is not very discernible: The clear and full light of humane and natural Knowledge, after the last

great Night of Ignorance, did arise with what is divine, to shew that God is the Authour of the one as well as of the other; and that the surest and readiest way to all useful and solid Knowledge, is to aim at the Glory of God, and to study right and just Apprehensions of him and his holy Will. And because then, the Obstacles were many, the Difficulties very great, and the Assistances very few, therefore, God at that time did give the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Study and Application, and what else is necessary for promoting Knowledge, in greater measure, than what has been bestowed almost upon any since: For extraordinary Gifts are not necessary, when ordinary ones is sufficient; Manna was not given after the Israelites came into *Canaan*, because not then needful as in the Wilderness; and Inspiration ceased, when the means of all saving and useful Knowledge was established. Now can this difference of mens Capacities? Can this vast difference of the Genius of the World, at one time and another? Can this so different temper of one and the same Nation in different times; I say can these be assign'd to any other cause, but the Arbitrary and Wise Providence of God? Who for secret Reasons unknown to us, worketh differently in Men, upon Men, and by Men.

13. Before I leave this Head, I desire that there may be a particular Consideration had of that Genius and Spirit which is for projecting, and which conduceth to the forming and contriving Designs. Though the Persons who possess this Genius and Spirit, sometimes are not in the highest Esteem for Solidity of Judgment, yet none are more useful; for they are as the Springs which set the rest-a going, and if it had not been for them, the World had never been the better for the Capacities, Powers, and Faculties with which many are endued. It is this which awakeneth the Spirits of other Men, which obligeth them to unite and exert their Forces for the common good of Mankind: And by this, Vast and Magnificent Fabricks have been erected without laying
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a heavy Burden upon any ; profitable Manufactures have been set up, an useful Correspondence amongst Mankind established, and both Trade and Government put into admirable Methods of an easie Management. Besides what hath been said to prove that every particular Genius and Spirit is of God, it doth further appear that this is from him, first because they who have it are acted by a kind of divine Impulse which makes them restless until they have gained their design, notwithstanding all the Baffles, Difficulties, and Discouragements which they meet with : And it is no small Discouragement that Projectors have generally ruined themselves while they contrived Advantage to others. Why should one disturb his own Peace, and trouble himself to serve others who are not very sensible of the Favour, if there were not something of Providence in it ? which in the next place appears from the Juncture of time and other Circumstances : For the use and advantage of the Project, being plain and evident, how comes it that it was never thought on before ? Why should this Man rather than another move for it ? Seeing there are many others no less capable. Why should the Discovery of a new World fallen so late ? And why *Columbus* to have projected it rather than another ? What moved him to leave his settled Residence amongst his Friends, and his certain Employment in his own Country, and to wander about for Assistance to an uncertain, dangerous, and difficult Undertaking ? And what clearer Evidence had the King of *Spain* for entertaining the Motion, more than the King of *England*, the State of *Genova*, and others ? No other Answer can be given to this and several other Instances, but only that the Providence of God so ordered and determined it.

14. Which suggests a Seventh Instance of a Divine and Particular Providence, from the admirable and useful Inventions for furthering the Advantages and Conveniences of Life, which is but little taken notice of : For these are not the Products of humane Reason, nor can

Man be said to be the Author of them. In regard of Men, they are *Reperta* not *Inventa*; found, not devised; lighted on without Inquest or Design, as *Anah* found the Mules in the Wilderness when he was not looking for them, *Gen.* 36. 24. The first Hint and Occasion was given by Providence, and Man's part was no more but the Application and working out of what was thus suggested: As in a piece of Workmanship, the Contrivance must be ascribed to the Master, though the Apprentice may have the Praise of making it. And to baffle the Pride of Men, to take from them all Pretences to Vanity, and that God and not Man may have the Glory, therefore these useful things have been discovered for the most part by Persons of all others least sufficient, and at times of all others most unlikely and improper. Thus Gunpowder which is so profitable for War was fallen upon by, not an Ingeneer or one who had his Head upon Warlike Designs, but a Monk, in a time when a Warlike Spirit was not very predominant: Whereas it was more agreeable to the times of *Alexander*, *Cesar*, and *Pompey*, when all the World was engaged in War, and when the greatest Wits were exercised how to devise the most effectual means, either of defending themselves, or offending their Enemies. Brimstone and Saltpetre, the chief Ingredients of Gunpowder, were well enough known in those Days, yet it never came into their Heads to mix them together. The Art of Printing which is so easie and useful, escaped the fertile and subtle Invention of the *Egyptians*, the Wisdom of *Solomon*, the Wit of *Athens* and *Rome*, though all of them used Seals which seem naturally to suggest it; and at last, in a time of great Ignorance fell into the Hands of a common Tradesman. I am also fully perswaded that Writing and the first use of Letters was by divine Inspiration, whether to *Moses* or to any before him, I will not determine: But I think it is evident, that the use of Letters is posteriour to Hieroglyphicks, which symbolical way of conveying wise and moral Instructions I apprehend

prehend was used, because they could not write Words: However, I will not insist on this Conjecture, and I do leave the Verity of it to the Judgment of Antiquaries. It is certain, that the Art of Navigation was not attempted before *Noah's Ark*, as is evident from both Scripture and Pagan Authors: Wherefore *Horace* calls Seamen *Audax Japeti Genus*. And though the *Phœnicians* practised this Art very much, yet they could not bring it to the present Perfection, to which it has arrived by the occasional Discovery of the Loadstone: Which admirable and useful Stone God reserved in secret until these last Days, that he was to give a more plentiful Measure of the Spirit of Trade and Commerce, and to unite by an easie Correspondence the remotest parts of the Earth. Though Glass be artificial, yet the Invention is not owing to Man, but to Providence by the accidental burning a Ship upon the Sand, as some report it. And the Improvement of Glass first into Spectacles for aiding the Sight, was occasioned by looking through Ice as others very probably give out; as the further Improvement of it into Telescopes was from a mere Block-head, if the Relation of *Cartesius* be true: But though it be admitted, that the first Telescopes were devised by Men of more Sense as others relate, yet the Invention is late, and by any thing which appears merely accidental. Which is an upbraiding Instance how little Man can do until Providence set it before his Eyes. Strange that the ingenious *Archimedes*, and all the rest of the Mathematicians could not devise sooner, by all their Speculation and Art, what is so useful to them! Were not the Opticks and Dioptricks studied before? Or being studied, how came it that it never fell into their Heads to make an Experiment about Glass for illustrating and demonstrating their Notions? Especially, considering that it was obvious to them both that Glass was diaphanous, capable to receive and convey the Rays of Light; and also that there is in the Frame of the Eye, the ChrySTALLINE Globe so resembling Glass, as doth

plainly suggest the making some Experiment, which yet was never done till these later Days. But to give an Instance yet more pat, what is more common or more necessary than Bread, which cannot be made without grinding Corn into Meal, and yet the easie and convenient way of doing it by Wind and Water-Mills is a late Invention: For several Thousand Years it was only done by the Hand, and in many places at this day they do it no otherwise, which is very troublesome and in no wise speedy. What a Trouble and Impediment was it to the Roman Legions, and other such vast Armies as the Ancients used to lead out into the Fields, when the Soldiers carried both their Corn, and the Hand-Mills with which they were to grind it. And we must not undervalue those in the first Ages of the World; for it is evident, that their Understandings were as great, and their Spirits as capable as those of the present Generation: But we must attribute to Providence any advantage which these later Ages have by the many useful Inventions, which, without the divine Providence so ordering it, had been as little known to us as to them. Why the Discovery of so many useful things should have been put off till these later Days, is a secret which we cannot know, this, as other ways of God, is unaccountable and past finding out.

The fore-mentioned Instances are not all that can be given, many more might be brought from Physick and other Sciences. But these are sufficient to our purpose, which is to shew that God has not deserted the World, but doth still exercise a special Providence in managing the Affairs of Mankind, and when his Wisdom sees it fit, he doth set them upon proper and admirable ways of advancing their common good and interest. These things cannot be ascribed to Man himself, for he never had them in his Head, he was not searching after them but only occasionally found them. Indeed *Columbus* aimed at a New World, and the Discovery of it was the Effect of his Voyage, but this was after that it was suggested to him by several things: But most if not all
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of the other Inventions were not at all intended by the Men who first produced them; and the Nature and Effects of these things are too important to be laid on chance or no cause. Frequent Hits of great Wisdom, Design and Contrivance must have some wise Authour, who can be no other but God, who knows all things, understands the Nature, Vertue, Uses of all his Works, and how far their Powers may be extended, and who being always present knows also when it is fit to make the Discovery to Men. And because Man is apt to be lifted up with Vanity, and to arrogate to himself what is due to God, therefore he discovers these things at times when they are least expected, to Persons who had no thought of them, and by Means and Instruments in the Eyes of Men very improper and unsufficient; *He chuseth the foolish things of the World to confound and put to shame the wise, and the weak things of the World to confound the mighty, that no Flesh should glory in his Presence, that the wise Man may not glory in his Wisdom, nor the mighty Man in his Strength, nor the rich Man in his Riches, but that every Man may glory in the Lord.*

15. To proceed to the Manifestations of Divine Providence, we may reckon as an Eighth Instance of it, the secret Disposall of Money so as to keep up the due Value of it, notwithstanding the continued Practice of Men to make the World abound with it. When the Use of Money began, is uncertain: The first time we read of it is Gen. 23. when *Abraham weighed unto Ephron four hundred shekels of silver, currant Money with the Merchant; which* shews that it was then universal, and consequently not a new or very late thing: For things become not universal in an Instant. This was about 429, or almost 488 Years after the Flood, therefore the Use of Money did take place shortly after it; or which I think more probable, it was before the Flood it self, for we read of Gold and Silver in the Antidiluvian World; and without doubt Men then barter'd with one another, for such things as their Necessity, Luxury, or

Vanity required : All these things were not neither could be common, but distinguished by Right and Property ; and nothing can be imagined so proper as Money to purchase what was in another's Possession. Whenever the Use of Money began, it was an admirable Contrivance for rewarding and encouraging Industry, for carrying on Trade and Commerce certainly, easily, and speedily ; for obliging all to employ their various Parts and several Capacities for the common good, and engaging every one to communicate the Benefit of his particular Labour without any Prejudice to himself. Therefore *Lycurgus* committed a great error in forbidding the Use of Gold and Silver in the Common-wealth of *Lacedæmon* ; whatever Wisdom he had, by this he shewed that he did not understand Men, nor the World, nor the present State of things sufficiently. Covetousness or an inordinate Love of Money is vicious and the Root of much evil, and ought to be remedied ; but the Use of Money is necessary, and attended with manifold Advantages. Where Money has not yet taken place, where the Use of it has not yet been introduced, Arts and Sciences are not cultivated, nor any of those Exercises plied which polite mens Spirits, and which abate the Uneasiness of Life : Men there are brutish and savage, none minds any thing but eating and drinking, and the other Acts of brutal Nature ; their thoughts aspire no higher than merely to maintain their Life and Breath ; like the Beasts they walk abroad all day long, and range about from place to place only to seek their Food. Whatever may be supposed to follow if all were acted with great Generosity and true Charity, yet according to the present Temper of Mankind, it is absolutely necessary that there be some Method and Means of Commutation as that of Money, for rendering all and every one mutually useful and serviceable. But as the Use of Money thus appears, so it can only have this Use and serve these ends by keeping up the Value of Gold and Silver to a reasonable Standard : For if Gold and Silver were as cheap

cheap and of as little value as Straw and Stubble, Sand or Stones, they would be of no more Use for Bartering and Commerce; and Gold and Silver would be of as little value, if they were as common and easie to come by, as they would by this time have been most common and contemptible if all that was digged out of the Bowels of the Earth was extant and still amongst Mens Hands. It is said, 1 *Kings* 10. That *Silver was nothing accounted of in the Days of Solomon, for he made Silver as Stones*: And 'twould have been so every whereat this Day if all had remained that was brought from under Ground: For Men have always digged for Gold and Silver most greedily, from the beginning they have been turning up the Earth where they suspected they were hid. Neither did they labour in vain, for they found incredible Treasures. It is said, That *Solomon* had brought him from *Ophir* every Year in Ingots, Six Hundred Sixty Six Talents of Gold, that is, Forty One Thousand Two Hundred Ninety Two Pounds Weight, besides what was paid him in Tribute, and Taxes from the Kings of *Arabia*, and other Princes which surrounded him, and from the Customs on Merchants Goods which were brought into his Kingdom, which if we suppose to be but as much, amounts to near an Hundred Thousand Pound Weight of Gold; so that during his Reign there was brought into that small spot of Ground above Four Millions of Pounds Weight of this Metal, without reckoning what came to private Persons, and besides the Silver which is said was as common as Stones; and therefore modestly reckoning, we may suppose to have been quadruple the Quantity of Gold, *viz.* Sixteen Million Weight of Plate; and if we suppose, which we may very well do, to have been coined of this a Million and half of Gold, and Eight Million of Silver, then the current Coin was One Hundred Twenty Eight Million Sterling, allowing an Ounce of Silver to a Crown, and an Ounce of Gold to pass for Four Pound in Money: But how considerable soever this is, yet it was nothing in
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Comparison of what was circulating through the rest of the World; for *Egypt* and *Arabia*, *India* and *Persia*, and other Parts also abounded at that time with all manner of Riches. Though no particular Nation was so rich as the *Jews* then, yet we cannot allow their Riches to bear more than the Proportion of a Tenth to all the Riches of the rest of the World: Nor was that the first Age, in which Men searched after Gold and Silver; this was always practised, what the Industry or Covetousness of those times produced was not the first Stock, but an Addition to what had been a gathering for Three Thousand Years before. Neither were After-ages satisfied with what they left, but were still upon the Scent of Gold and Silver, and setting all hands at work to draw it out. And let the most modest increase be only supposed, if all had continued, if nothing had been withdrawn, the World before this had been glutted and surfeited with Gold and Silver, these Metals would have lost their Value, and been as contemptible with every Person as they were in the Eyes of the Prophet, who rated them as *thick Clay*. There were rich Mines in *India*, *Persia*, *Hungary*, and other Parts of *Asia* and *Europe*, which yielded prodigious Quantities of Gold and Silver to former Ages; and it is astonishing to think what has been brought from *Africa* and *America* within these Two or Three Hundred Years. When the *Spaniards* came first to *Mexico* and *Peru*, they found Gold so plentiful that they made Bits of it for their Horses, Armour for themselves, plated the Beams of their Chambers, and ceiled some of them with it. In some places there is more Gold and Silver than Earth, and at *Potosi* the Mines are so rich as to afford enough for Twenty Thousand Mens daily Labour, which cannot be supposed to yield less than One Hundred Twenty Thousand Pound of Plate a Week, that is, a Pound a Day for each Man; all which Gold and Silver has been conveyed into *Europe* as fast as Ships could go and come: And yet *Spain* whither most of it is design'd has least of it, and other parts not so much

much as to make them undervalue it ; for as the Wisdom of God did not see it fit to scatter Gold and Silver above Ground, but to lay it up at remote and distant places within the Bowels of the Earth, that the labour and pains of fetching it thence might add a value to it : so when they multiply in Mens hands his wise Providence secretly substracteth the Super-plus, he sinketh part of it intirely that it may be lost for ever to the World, and other parts he only layeth up for a time until there be more Occasion for it ; at his Pleasure he changeth the place of these Treasures, he removeth them from one Nation to another ; when one Nation waxeth wanton by their Riches, he raiseth up another who scarce knows the Use of them, to take them out of their hand ; sometimes the Wealth of a Nation is drained by War, sometimes it is exported to bring in Corn, Bread, and other Necessaries, which are wanted because of the badness of their Harvest ; in a Word, one way or another, by some visible Methods and by some that are neither known nor foreseen, God preventeth the excessive Increase of Gold and Silver in any place, because too much abundance of them would destroy the very end and use of them, and would hinder all the good of them. For this Cause also as the World enricheth, he openeth the Passages of Commerce, and setteth up a Communication betwixt Places and People altogether unknown before, by which means the Wealth of the World is diffused and the Superfluity of Riches is carried off, which fixeth the value of them. Whosoever will consider this attentively, cannot but be convinced of a divine Providence, over-ruling and managing the Actions of Men for the common good, without their Knowledge and Intention, nay, even contrary to it.

16. This leads me to consider the publick Order and Government of the World, which upon serious Examination, will be found to be supported more by divine Providence and the secret unforeseen Effects of it, than by humane Policy. How necessary Government is to the
Peace

Peace and Welfare of Mankind in general, and of every particular Person, is or may be obvious to all. Confusion and Destruction would instantly follow if there were no Government; for then Men would devour one another, for they are but very few who are acted with Love, Generosity, Honour, Principles of Justice and Piety, or a regard to the common good: The Generality are entirely selfish, each preferreth his own particular to all the rest of the World; and would, if permitted, pursue his Inclination, or what seems his Interest, though it were to the ruine of all others. There are loud Complaints of the present Wickedness of Mankind, and indeed every place abounds with Instances of Oppression and Violence, Fraud and Injustice, and all sorts of Villainies: But the State of things would be Ten Thousand times worse, if there was no Awe nor Restraint upon Men; if every Man had Liberty to do what is right in his own Eyes, that is, what he pleased, then Earth would turn a Hell, and one might be more safe amongst the savage Beasts, than with those of his own Kind. It is by the means of Government that the simple are instructed, and the well-meaning directed to what is right; it is this which tames the wrathful, ties up the Hands of the cruel, and which puts a check upon the cunning; and without this there could be no safe or comfortable Living in the World, the very Form of Justice and Honesty would wear out, and 'twould be impossible to carry on any important or considerable Project.

But now what is thus so much necessary and useful to the Preservation of Order and Peace, to the Establishment of Commerce and Traffick, and to the promoting of excellent and advantageous Designs, is neither of humane Contrivance, nor is it supported chiefly by humane Means. Government and the excellent ends and uses of it, are but very little regarded either by publick or private Persons. The Mob or Multitude are not sensible of the good of it, they bear the Yoke of it impatiently,
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and are easily deluded to break it, which always proves to their greater Prejudice. And as for those in Authority, to whose hands the Reins of Government are committed, it may be observed of them, that generally they have not the great ends of it before them; they aim at the publick good as little as private Persons, as appears too often by their partial Administrations; the thoughts of both the one and other are wholly about their particular Concerns: But God by his wise Providence so manageth the Actions of both, that without their Intention he makes them serviceable to the publick Order and Government of the World, without which it could not subsist.

Government is a divine Ordinance and Institution, and it is by the Power and special Providence of God that it is continued and supported. Those who make another Original of Government, build upon imaginary Hypotheses, which are not consistent with the Truth of History, and which are so improbable as to be next to impossible. They little consider the Nature of Mankind, their various Sentiments, their obstinate Temper, their Fondness of Liberty, and their great Aversion to Subjection and Dependency, who think that Government did arise from Compact, that Numbers and Multitudes would complement one or a few with their Liberty, and voluntarily consent to be directed, restrained, and punished by them: And it is as little to be supposed, that they would have suffered any to usurp such Authority over them, unless recommended and aided by a Power which cannot be resisted; and to find such a Power we must look higher than Earth, we must lift up our Eyes unto him who dwelleth in the Heavens, who has all Power to do whatsoever he pleaseth, and to whom all Creatures are subject. As there can be no lawful Authority, no rightful Dominion but what is derived from God, so foreseeing the Necessity and Advantage of Subordination and Government, he did actually institute and appoint them at first, and doth still by
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the secret and powerful Influences of his Providence oblige Mankind to the Observation of them, notwithstanding of their strong Inclinations to Liberty or rather Licentiousness. This is not precariously said, but it is grounded upon undoubted Matter of Fact, of which there are still remaining Evidences, and which cannot be denied without overturning the Credit of all History, and thwarting Reason it self, as may clearly appear by a due Consideration of the following Particulars.

17. First, What St. Paul saith, *Marriage is honourable amongst all Men*; in every Nation there is a Regard more or less paid to it: No Discovery hath as yet been made of any People, who live according to the Rules of Plato his imaginary Common-wealth, having Wives as well as other things in common; but every where there is a State of Wedlock, Men have their proper Wives, and Women their proper Husbands, though there be some difference in the Management of this State, according to the Customs of several Countries. Now though Marriage or a State of Wedlock be highly reasonable, most convenient, and of great Advantage to Mankind; yet no Reason *à priori* can be given of sufficient Force to oblige and determine Mankind necessarily into this State: It is none of the Dictates of Nature, and the Inclinations of the Generality both of Men and Women, are and have always been too much contrary to the Restraints which this State imposeth. We cannot therefore derive the Origin of Marriage and the universal Observation of it, but from a divine Institution according to the Tradition of the Scriptures: And the keeping up the Credit of this State of Life so little agreeable to the present depraved Nature of Mankind, and that too even amongst Heathens and those People who do not acknowledge the Authority of his Word and Laws; I say, this must be reckoned a particular Act of the Providence of God, who ordained this as a necessary Foundation of Government; for by this means Men are tied together by a strict and lasting Union, and as soon

as they are born become Members of a Society, and are engaged into a State of Subordination, which obligeth them to receive Laws and to obey them: Which could not be if Mankind was propagated as other Animals, for then Children would be *Incerti Patris*, it could not be known to whom they did belong, they who begat them would not think themselves obliged to stay with them or to take a Care of them; as they would be under no Obligation of paying Respect and Obedience to one Man more than another: Which would make the State of Mankind a State of great Disorder and Confusion, to prevent which the infinite Wisdom of God did at first institute Marriage, and if it was observed according to the first Institution of it, the general good of Mankind, and the Benefit of particular Persons would be exceedingly advanced by it. And how much soever the Depravation of Mens Nature doth carry them aside, yet God by his Providence doth so manage their Interests and Inclinations as to oblige them not to slight it, but to desire, honour, and esteem it; that the Bonds of Union and Friendship amongst Men may be strengthened, and the first Foundation of Order and Government secured.

18. In the next place, it was necessary for the good Government of the World, that Men should be incorporated into distinct Nations and Kingdoms; for an universal Monarchy is unweildy, and altogether above the Forces and Capacity of any one Man or small Number of Men to manage: And if Families had remained distinct and independent, neither great things could have been atchieved, nor publick Peace well preserved, nor Injuries either prevented or redressed. Now what is thus necessary was first of God, and is still kept up by him, as is convincingly delivered by the most authentick History of the World, I mean the History of the Scripture, which is not contradicted by other credible Historians, but rather confirmed by all the certain Accounts they give us of the Origin of Nations; for as for Con-
jectures,

jectures, no Strefs can be laid upon them *. It was the

* See Bocharrus Phaleg,
Sir Walter Rawleigh's
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most High, saith *Moses*, who divided to the Nations their Inheritance, when he separated the Sons of Adam, he set the Bounds of the People according

to the Number of the Children of *Israel*, *Deut.* 32. 8. by the Number of the Children of *Israel*, is meant 70, for so many Children did *Jacob* bring with him into *Egypt*, reckoning *Joseph* and his Children amongst them : And into just so many Nations did God divide the World, as appears from *Gen.* 10. where the Sons of *Japhet* are reckoned 14, the Sons of *Ham* 30, and of *Sem* 26, which makes in all 70. By them the World was planted and replenished with People ; and by them God did distinguish and divide Mankind into different Nations for the better and more easie Government of them. Unto the 14 Sons of *Japhet* was given the Isles of the Gentiles, that is, *Europe*, which is so called because of the many Isles which appertain to it ; and because the very Continent of *Europe* is a kind of Isle, being surrounded by the Sea, except towards the North where it joins *Asia*. *Africa* and *Syria* was the Lot of the Children of *Ham*, and the Children of *Sem* possessed and spread themselves through *Asia*. By which of these *America* was planted, or when, is altogether uncertain ; but it is certain, that all the Nations and People of the World are only the Branches and Offspring of these 70 Original Nations: And though Mankind has exceedingly multiplied since this first Division of them, and though divers States and Common-wealths have been erected, which were not from the Beginning ; yet I doubt much if there will be found at this Day more than 70 Classes of People, who may be said to be really distinct from one another, in their Temper, Language and Customs : Which if true, is a great Confirmation of the Truth of sacred History, and is a Proof of the watchful Providence of God, to declare that his Dominion over Men was and is still absolute, his Will irresistible, and that what he hath purposed cannot be defeated.

19. Which Thirdly, is yet more evident by the Methods he did take, and continues still to keep up that Division of Mankind which he decreed and appointed, in order to the good Government of the World. The first is the Diversity of Tongues, which as it first obliged them to separate, so it is more useful to unite Nations within themselves, and to distinguish them from one another, than if they were walled about with Stone or Brick, as *China* is divided from the *Tartars*, or as the Roman Emperours *Adrian* and *Severus* separated their Conquests in *Britain* from the *Scots* and *Picts*.

The Time and Occasion of dividing Tongues, and of causing Men to speak different Languages we learn from Scripture, and must take it upon the Authority thereof: But as the Scripture-Account of this is most rational and probable; so Reason it self may convince us, that this Diversity of Languages must have proceeded from some special and extraordinary Act of the Divine Power and Providence. For as no Language is natural to Men; they could speak neither one nor other unless they heard and were taught them; when God created our first Parents he also taught them to speak, otherwise we must suppose, that they conversed many Years together by dumb Signs, for Words come not by Instinct, nor is it obvious or easie to mark the different Sounds which may be made by the Throat, Palate, Tongue, Teeth and Lips, the Organs of Speech, as 'twould require no small time and very much Consideration to articulate them, or to adjust and form them into distinct, intelligible Words; therefore they talk wildly, who assert that Language was first the Invention of Men: So seeing Mankind did not proceed from different Stocks or Originals, but that it hath pleased God to *make of one Blood all Nations of Men*, no satisfactory, or so much as the least probable Reason can be given how they came to be, or why they should of themselves, divided into so many vastly different Languages; for though it be very possible, now that

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Men are taught the way of it, to invent new Words, and to make a new Language; yet this would only please a few curious contemplative Persons: It is the Desire and Interest of the Generality to understand one another, and therefore if it had been left to their own Arbitrement, they would have kept up the Use of one Language. It is true, indeed, that the most of Living Languages do sensibly vary, and the very same Language will differ very much from it self in the space of an Hundred or Two Hundred Years, as may be observed from our own, the French, and the Latin, which was not the same a good while after the Erection of the Consular-State, that it was in the Days of *Cicero* and *Augustus*, as appears from some old Inscriptions, *Ennius*, *Plautus*, and some Fragments of the first Roman Authors. But neither can the Diversity of Tongues be resolved into this Cause, for such Variations are mostly observable in Languages that are not Original, but which are a Composition of different Languages by the mixture and blending together of different Nations: Whereas the Primitive and Original Languages have never been so diversified as that they cannot be known and distinguished. The Greek in *Homer's* Days, continued good and fashionable as long as *Greece* flourished, and what is spoken at this Day doth not differ so much as not to appear at the very first to be the same Language. I have heard it observed by those who pretend to know it, that the *Eastern* Languages have varied very little, that both the Dialect and Customs of the People in *Asia* are the same as were some Thousands of Years ago; and if so, what should hinder us from thinking them the same as at the beginning? However, the diverse Languages in the World, cannot by any Shadow of Reason be said to be either a Variation, or a Degeneracy, or an Improvement of some one first Language; for there is no Affinity, nor Resemblance, nor any thing common amongst them, except in such Languages as are evidently derived from others, as the *Italian*, *French* and *Spanish*.

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Wherefore we are forced to receive and acknowledge for Truth, the Account which the Scripture gives of the Diversity of Tongues, *viz.* That God caused it, for this reason, even to oblige Mankind to observe his Will and Ordinance of separating themselves into distinct Nations and Kingdoms. God had ordered, by *Noah* himself in all Probability, a Division of Mankind into seventy Nations or Kingdoms, and *had determined the Bounds of their Habitations*, as was before observed from *Gen. 10*. But it seems as they journeyed to take Possession of their several Lots, they were either disgusted by some Difficulties, or allured by the Pleasantness of the plain of *Shinaar*, which made them to mutiny against the Decree for their Separation, and to think upon thwarting it in some measure by the building of *Babel*. What they particularly intended by this Tower, or how they thought by it to prevent their Separation doth not appear; but it is clear, from the Text, that they had some such Design in their Head, for *they said, Go to, let us build us a City and a Tower, whose top may reach unto Heaven, and let us make us a Name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole Earth*, and the common Opinion of their doing it out of Fear of a second Deluge is in no wise probable, for if that had been their Design, they would not have chosen a Plain but a Mountain; nor is it to be supposed that they had so soon forgot the Tradition of the Rainbow, which was the *Token of God's Covenant*, that he would not *any more destroy the Earth and all Flesh in it by Waters*. This Enterprize proceeded meerly from their Aversion and Unwillingness to comply with the Divine Command, for spreading themselves abroad through the World: But whilst they were a devising how to fix and unite themselves, God, whose Counsel standeth for ever, by dividing their Tongues and giving to each Division a different Language, and by making those of a new Language to forget the old, he necessitated them to obey his Will, and to separate themselves whither he had

before ordained them. And as by this miraculous Confusion of Languages God first established the several Nations into which he had divided the World, so by continuing the Diversity of Tongues he keeps up the Distinction of them.

20. Another Method of Providence for keeping up the Distinction of Nations, and fixing them to their pre-determined Seats, is the inspiring the Generality with a particular Affection to their own Nation and People, and with a strong Attachment to their Native Country. The Matter of Fact I need not prove, for it is what almost every Man may observe in others and find in himself. That common saying *Omne solum forti Patria*, every place is alike to a wise and virtuous Man, holds true in Speculation much more than in Practice; it shews what ought to be rather than what actually is; for great and wise, and good Men as well as others, have for the most part, strong Inclinations for their own Country, which are not overcome by the greater Advantages of other Places. Hence it is that the Generality chuse to bear great Inconveniences in their own Country, rather than to seek their Ease and Relief in foreign Parts. Many are willing to pass some time abroad, that they may satisfy their Curiosity, taste the Pleasures of other Countries, and purchase to themselves a Name and Reputation which may procure them a better Reception at Home; but seldom any thing but Force and absolute Necessity make one change his Country and fix his Abode elsewhere. And even then too, Men part with Regret, as appears by their passionate Remembrances and the many kind Looks which they cast back. I do not say that it is always so, but seldom otherwise; I do not assert that this Attachment and these Inclinations to ones own Native Soil are in each particular Person, but only in the Generality; for I do acknowledge that there are many Instances to the contrary: And therefore, I say, that as this Attachment and these Inclinations cannot be called a political Device, so they are not the Effect of Nature or Reason

Reason only, but proceed chiefly from Providence, that Nations may not fail, nor Countries be depopulated: For if 'twere not upon this Account, Men would be impatient of the Inconveniences of their own Country, Disgusts and Difficulties would make them run away and be continually changing Places; and so a great many through the Inconstancy of their Humours and foolish Expectations, would never settle, and the most of others would crowd into the best Climates and richest Countries, which would leave the greatest part of the World desolate and uninhabited. Whereas now, by this Method of Providence we are upon, Nations are preserved, all Countries good and bad are almost equally inhabited; nay the last may be observed to be rather better planted than the other; and by this means, Men are engaged to cultivate the barren as well as the rich and fertile Soil, whose Art and Industry are so much prospered and encouraged by Divine Providence, that those parts of the World which possess the least and fewest Advantages by Nature, may vie Convenience of Living with the very best Countries.

Thus Divine Providence, by these and some other means which I will now pass over, doth separate Mankind into several Nations and Kingdoms, as they were at first divided by the Infinite Wisdom of God, for the better and more easy Government of the World.

21. Fourthly, As the Authority of Kings and Rulers, and the Obedience of the People is the Foundation and Security of Government, and consequently absolutely necessary to the Peace and Welfare of a Nation or Kingdom; so when all things are duely considered, we must acknowledge that this Foundation was at first laid by God, and is still preserved by his Providence. *In the Division of the Nations of the whole Earth, it was He who set a Ruler over every People, as saith the wise Son of Sirach, Eccclus. 17. 17. Kings and the Rulers of the Earth have their Authority only from God, and it is he who maintains it: What Respect and Acknowledgment is paid*

unto them is the Effect of his Ordinance and Institution. What but the powerful Influence of Providence over the Minds of Men, could make a whole Nation dread one Man, and Thousands of desperately wicked People stand in awe of a single Person? If People were refractory and stubborn, as they are naturally inclin'd, the Laws and Statutes of Kings could not force their Submission and Obedience, no more than a Pen-gun could batter down a Stone-wall: Nor have Kings always in their own Persons such extraordinary Endowments and Qualifications as may command that regard which is due to the Dignity of their State. It is true sometimes Men have a Spirit and Countenance which gain them a strange Ascendancy over others, and which oblige all they converse with to pay them Reverence: But this is not a peculiar Excellency to Kings, neither all nor most of them have in themselves what may render them superiour to others, many of them have had neither Majesty in their Looks or Persons, nor Goodness in their Temper, nor Vertue in their Manners: And yet generally the Fear and Dread of both good and bad Kings strike a deep Impression upon their Subjects; which like the dread of Man upon Beasts, is an arbitrary Effect of the Divine Providence to keep the World in Peace and Order; for seeing Conscience and Principles of Religion have Room and Entertainment but with very few, God by this means obligeth the Multitude to honour, obey, and to pay Tribute to those whom he hath set over them, I cannot say willingly, but it is done readily, which serveth well enough to support Government and to promote the ends of it.

That this awful Regard of Kings and other Rulers, which is the Support of their Authority and the Cause of Peoples Compliance and Obedience, is more the Effect of some special continued Providence, than of any humane Policy, or concerted Measures amongst Men, I say this will be further confirmed by the Affronts and Indignities sometimes committed upon the Persons of
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Kings, and by the Insurrections and Rebellions so frequent in the World: For these shew what Men would do if they were left to themselves, and if God did not restrain them; hereby it appears, that Kings are not more safe than others, that their Guards and Forces are not sufficient Protection to their Persons and Government, if God did not defend both. The Honour and Safety of Kings depend not upon their good Government, nor doth their evil Treatment proceed always from their Male-administrations: For Tyrants and bad Kings have reigned quietly, and died in Peace; whilst the Thrones of just and good Kings have been pull'd down, and violent Hands laid upon their Persons. *Queen Elizabeth* was indeed, a wise and great Princess, but she was guilty of far more arbitrary Acts than *King Charles I.* nor was she so condescending to the People as he; and yet the People never murmured against her, but were well pleased with all she did, whereas they continually quarrell'd with the other and pursued him to an untimely and barbarous Death. Grievances are not always provoking, sometimes the People bear extream great ones tamely and patiently as if they had no feeling; at other times very small and inconsiderable things will make them foam, rage, and run mad, so that neither the wisest Heads nor strongest Hands can manage them. Tumults, Insurrections, and Rebellion, are not certain Indications of an evil King or a bad Government, for oft-times People break out into these when they are least provoked, as can be made appear from manifold Instances out of the Histories of our own and other Nations. Mankind is much the same every where, nor is their Nature and Principles better at one time than another: When therefore People are peaceable, when they keep their Ranks, are observant of Order, respectful of Majesty, and submissive to Authority, it is not from any Prevalency of Conscience, Reason, or the necessary Interest of the State, for these Considerations have little or no place in their Thoughts; nor is it

because they have no Pretext to be rebellious or tumultuary, for there is no Reign free of Male-administrations, and there have escaped the best and wisest, and most fortunate Kings, what has been the Ruine and Overthrow of others. A Jest broke upon the Eunuch *Narses*, by the Empress *Sophia*, brought Destruction to the Empire of the East, under *Justin II.* The Rape upon *Lucrece* was the Occasion of expelling not only *Tarquinius* and his Race, but the Regal Authority out of *Rome*; and the first Revolution of *Spain* which did let in the Moors to that Kingdom, came by the King's deflowering a Daughter of one of the *Grandeos*. But if contemptuous Speeches, if Words of Reproach, if the Commission of these and such like Crimes, nay, if the frequent Repetition of them had been alway attended with the like Fate, few Kings would have escaped Disgrace or reigned long, and almost every Year in every Kingdom there should have been Changes and Revolutions in the Government.

* Now seeing sometimes the Majesty of Kings is trampled upon, their Persons abused, their Authority despised upon very small and

slight Occasions, and at other Times they are acknowledged
 * *Providentiæ divinæ circa res hominum non leve argumentum & Philosophi, & Historici agnoscunt in Conservatione Rerum publicarum: Primum universim, quod ubicunque ordo ille regendi parendique receptus est, manet semper: Deinde sæpe etiam specialiter in longa duratione hujus aut illius formæ Imperii per multa sæcula; ut Regii apud Assyrios, Ægyptios, Francos; optimatum apud Venetos. Quanquam enim humana sapientiâ aliquid in hoc potest; tamen, si recte consideretur multitudo malorum hominum & quæ extrinsecus nocere possint & agnæ quasi rebus vicissitudines, non videtur tam diu Imperium aliquod posse subsistere, nisi peculiari quadam divini Numinis cura; quæ evidentius etiam spectatur, ubi Deo visum est mutare Imperia. Nam quibus ille, tum ad eam Rem, tanquam sibi destinatam instrumentis utitur, puta *Cyros*, *Alexandro*, *Cæsare Dictatore*, apud *Tartaros Cingi*, apud *Sinenfes Namcaa*, his omnia etiam quæ ab humana prudentia non pendent, fluunt supra votum magis quam fert solita casibus humanis varietas: Quæ tanta eventuum similitudo, & ad certum finem quasi Conspiratio, Judicium est providæ directionis.*
Grotius de Verit. Rel. lib. 1. Sect. 12.

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and obeyed even whilst they provoke the People by the hardest Oppressions; seeing, sometimes contemptible Beginnings are prosperous to the Overthrow of Kings and Government, and at other times well-laid Plots are defeated; seeing a *Massianello* is capable to dissolve the Government of *Naples*, seeing he without Authority, without Armies, by Boys, Women, and an undisciplin'd Rabble could shake and dissipate the haughty Power of *Spain*; and yet the bold Attempts, the deep Contrivance, the secret and cunning Machinations of the most daring and most accomplish'd Marquis de *Bedemar* against the State of *Venice*, were baffled and came to nothing, though he had all the Assistance which *Spain* could give him, and a great many favourable and promising Advantages, and though that Republick gave him no Opposition; for all the time that the Marquis was a carrying on his Conspiracy, they suspected nothing but lay still and secure: Seeing sometimes People are most tenacious of the Rights of their Kings, and do suffer extream Hardships for the Maintenance of their Authority, and at other times they shamefully leave and desert them as if they were under no Obligation, and are frightened from their Duty as easily as Birds, by the setting up of a Stick and Clouts. Now, I say, seeing things happen so, we cannot but acknowledge, that the Authority of Kings and the Subjection of People, are the Effects of Divine Providence rather than of humane Policy: He who gathereth the Winds into his Fists, and who stayeth the rough Wind, it is even he, and none else who stilleth the People, who quieteth their unruly Humours and Passions, and who maketh them tractable and pliant to those whom he has appointed to govern them. When he would make a Nation happy, he keepeth the People in Subjection, and under Restraint; but when he is provoked to punish them, or to chastise the Pride of Kings and Princes, he taketh off the secret Curb of his Providence, and leaveth them to their Liberty: And then they are as wahton Horses, which when the Bridle

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is broken, throw their Riders, kick at their very Keepers, observe no plain or direct Paths, but run furiously up and down all Fields, and are never more manageable until they have spent their Strength and Spirits.

22. Fifthly, The Detection of secret Crimes, and the bringing to light those wicked Acts which are perpetrated in private, is a clear Proof of Providence, and a Demonstration that the World is governed by God more than Men. Whatever outward Restraints humane Laws may be supposed to lay; yet they do not change the Nature or Inclinations of Men, nor do they work in them any Aversion or Abhorrency to those Vices to which they are naturally inclined or strongly tempted: For when an occasion offers, which seems to promise Security from the Laws, they embrace it readily, and proceed without Fear. The most which humane Laws do, is, that they tie up the Hands of the simple, and put others to the trouble of acting with some more Cunning and Caution, those Crimes which cannot escape Punishment: Therefore they watch Opportunities of Secrecy, when they think no Eye seeth them, nor any present that may be an Evidence against them; or they join such Accomplices as they judge will not betray them upon the account of their own Interest and other Engagements. Thus the Thief and Robber, like the *Beasts of the Forest creep forth in the Night*, when it is dark they go out after their prey, they wander about to find what and whom they may catch, *until the Sun ariseth when the Lyons do gather themselves together, and lay themselves down in their Dens*, and then too these savage, cruel, and inhumane Men do retire because their Actions cannot endure the Light. *The wicked lurketh and lieth in wait secretly as a Lyon in his Den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor, he doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his Net.* Wicked Contrivances to entrap the Innocent, to ruine the Fatherless and Widows, and other poor People are often so laid, as that they

they may claim the Assistance and Protection of the Law it self; so bent are Men upon evil and mischief, so cunningly and so secretly do they pursue it, that neither Laws nor Government could be a Curb to the wicked or Security to the Innocent, if God by his wise Providence did not more discourage all wicked Enterprizes, in shewing by manifold Instances, that Cunning and Secrecy cannot cover them. *Darkness hideth not from God, but the Night shineth as the Day, the Darkness and the Light are both alike to him*, so that there is no concealing ones self from him: His Eyes can see through the thickest Clouds, and do pierce into the most secret Corners; nay he spies the Thoughts of Men afar off, he knows what is in their Hearts, he foresees all their Devices, and *considereth all their Works*, and both to deterr Men from their Wickedness, and to shew his own Indignation, he bringeth the hidden Works of Darkness to light, and discovereth the most secret Machinations of crafty and wicked Men, sometimes before they take effect, that the Authors may have Shame and Confusion, and that the Innocent may prevent the Mischief, which was intended to them: But sometimes to accomplish other ends of his wise Counsel, he winketh at Mens Wickedness until they have done and wrought their point, and then his Providence layeth Hands on them and delivereth them up to be punished and made a publick Example. God so ordereth it, that the prudent are sometimes outwitted by the simple, the wise are taken in their own Craftiness, their Over-cautiousness betrays them; he infatuates their Counsels, and makes them guilty of great and strange Over-sights; he raiseth sometimes a Misunderstanding amongst the Accomplices, or causeth them to mistake their Measures; by some unexpected occurrence or other he makes known what Villainies are plotted and acted privately; and these Discoveries are made in such a way and manner, and by such means as may force an Acknowledgment of the wise, just, and watchful Providence of God.

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But the Divine Providence is not more visible in any thing, than in preventing and detecting of Murther. As it is not the Interest of any State or People to tolerate and encourage this Crime ; so it is not the Will of God that it should pass unpunished : The express Law given to the Jews, was, *Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a Murderer, which is guilty of death, but he shall be surely put to death.* Nay, by the Constitution of that Nation, the very Land was answerable for the Blood which was shed in it, and liable to the Divine Vengeance till it was punished : *For blood it defileth the land ; and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it,* Numb. 35. 31, 33. And according to the same Rule and Measure God hath always, and will ever proceed with every other Nation, agreeably to that unalterable Law which was given to Noah, and all Mankind after the Flood, *Surely your blood of your lives will I require ; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man ; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed ; for in the image of God made he man,* Gen. 9. 5, 6. The Laws of God bind Rulers and Magistrates, even the most Supreme, as well as other People, for all are Subjects to him : Therefore none ought to dispence with the Punishment of wilful and deliberate Killing ; the most Absolute King cannot, by virtue of any Power and Authority from God, whose Minister he is, pardon the Crime or grant the Life of him who is guilty of it ; when he doth it, he usurpeth upon the Prerogative of God himself, he claims more than what God judgeth fit to grant, and draws a guilt upon his own Head, which has been the ruine of many great and powerful Families. God, who is the Supreme Lord of Heaven and Earth, who has an Absolute Dominion over all Creatures, and who is not under any Law but that of his own Will and Nature, we see by the Tenour of that Law just now mentioned, has ty'd himself for ever from dispensing with the Punishment of this Sin : Wherefore his Divine

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Vengeance very often exemplarily pursueth those who escape Humane Justice; and his All-seeing Providence doth sometimes even miraculously interpose for discovering of secret Murder, that upon the producing the Persons guilty, both Magistrates and People may take occasion to purge the Land of the Pollution, and to save themselves from the Wrath and Judgments of God, which Murder and Bloodshedding calls for.

Thus sometimes when no body could inform the thing, because the Murderer watcht his opportunity, and, for the greater security, would not trust the Secret to another, God has written his guilt upon his Forehead, and made him to betray himself, by the Confusion of his Countenance, and the Agony of his Mind. Sometimes dumb Beasts, and things Inanimate, have extorted a Confession, when other Evidences have been wanting. Sometimes the dead Body it self has detected its Murderer, by Bleeding, and other Preternatural Motions at his approach to it. And sometimes, when the Barbarity has been transacted with that privacy that nothing could discover it, it has been revealed by Dreams, Visions, and the Apparition of Ghosts from the other World. By these and some other such strange, surprising, extraordinary, supernatural and miraculous Means, when the common and ordinary Methods of Detection were ineffectual, the divine Providence of God hath brought to light the treacherous and barbarous Murders which have been committed in private, sometimes presently, and sometimes not for several years after the commission, to declare to the World, that God remembreth what Man forgetteth, that he will in no wise clear the Guilty, and that though he delays, yet he will not fail to punish wicked Men at one time or another; so that none have reason to harden their hearts, or to flatter themselves with security in their wickedness; for when Sinners least think on't, Providence catcheth hold of them, draweth them forth of their lurking places, and maketh an Example of them.

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I forbear to run out into particular Instances of such wonderful and remarkable Discoveries, for 'twould require a Volume by it self to relate all of this kind, which may be gathered from ancient Records or modern Memoirs, and which is well attested by the certain Tradition of former Times, or by living Witnesses of unquestionable Credit: And 'twill be to little purpose to offer one or two, when every Man's Reading and Observation may furnish him with many. Heathens as well as Christians have taken notice of these things, which are and have been so certain and frequent; that I may confidently say, neither Age nor part of the World, neither time nor place, neither Kingdom nor Province, have been left without a Witness of the Divine Providence in this matter as well as other particulars, which nothing but a willful, obstinate and unreasonable Incredulity can reject.

23. I have now produced several Instances from the Intellectual World, which singly, but especially when taken together, may clearly convince any that the same is Governed by God, that Mankind and humane Affairs are under his Conduct, and that his Providence is the chief support of the Peace, Order, and Government of particular States and Kingdoms. I have purposely instanc'd in such Matters of Fact, as would not put my self to the trouble of a tedious Proof, nor yet weary the Reader with a painful Examination. What I have offer'd is obvious to every serious Observer in every part of the World, and there needs not much Pains or Travail to come to the Knowledge of it. Perhaps some of these things we have touched, have not been much considered before, with a Regard to Providence, nor urged as Proofs of it by others: But I hope 'twill be now acknowledged, that they may justly. The meanest of them is of considerable Importance to the common Welfare of Mankind, if all or most of them were wanting, what Confusion and Disorder? What Ruin and Desolation would follow? Then Mankind would be more miserable

ferable than Beasts, and in a worse State than other Animals: But what is so much for their Interest, depends not on themselves nor is effectuated by their means; some things are no part of their Choice, nor ever under their Care and Deliberation; other things are not within the reach of their Power or Skill; some things are carried on without their consent, contrary to their Intentions and Endeavours; and what seems most under their Management, is but very little promoted by their Policy. A constant Tract of lucky Hits can never come from Chance, nor can the wise Adaptation of different things, their mutual Correspondence and Serviceableness to a certain End, ever happen without a suitable Cause: To what then should we ascribe so many wise and admirable Contrivances for the good of Mankind? But to the wise Care and Providence of God, who intends by these things to prove his continual Presence amongst Men, and his Kindness and good Will towards them: For nothing but infinite Wisdom could have devised all these things, and nothing but Infinite Power could so punctually effectuate them; as it is evident from the arbitrary procedure, the Method and Manner of working, the particular Determination of time and place, and other Circumstances which may be observed, that they do not flow from any inevitable Fate, or Necessity, nor are they Consequences of any fixed immutable Laws imposed on things themselves, but that they are Acts of a free intelligent Agent, that is, of God who would shew his own Will and Pleasure, his Superiority and Superintendency over those Creatures which he has made reasonable and free, as well as over others.

24. But these hitherto insisted on, are not all nor the chief Instances of Providence, which may be gathered from the state of Mankind, and Humane Affairs; for there be many more, and very considerable ones too, yet behind. I might proceed to evince a Providence, from the frequent over-ruling the Prudence, Policy and
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Valour of Men, the bringing to pass things impossible in humane appearance, and the disappointing what was not only most probable, but what seemed very certain, of which there are many Examples in History. I might demonstrate a Providence, from the Rise, Advancement and Translation of the Four Monarchies, which were design'd to unite the divided Nations into an agreeable Correspondence, that they might be polished and civilized by their mutual Commerce, and that they might be the better prepared to receive the Light of the Gospel, and that it might be the more easily transmitted through the World. I might confirm this, by the vain Attempts to raise a Fifth Monarchy, which one while *Spain*, and another while *France* have been contending for; and both of them, the one formerly, the other still, more capable, and better furnish'd for such a Design, than *Nineveh*, *Babylon*, *Macedon*, or *Rome* at first were. *Gustavus* of *Sweden* seem'd also to have had some such thing in his head, his Hopes swallowed all this part of the World, and he apprehended that he could make the *Goths* a second time conquer the Western Empire; neither *Cyrus*, nor *Alexander*, nor *Cesar* started out so formidably, nor had He half of their Difficulties to conquer; his Noise did shake distant Nations, and in the common Opinion of the World, his Conquests were not only probable, but certain: but behold, of a sudden his Life and Hopes were cut off, his Forces dissipated, and both the Expectation and Fears of Men were frustrated, which proves, that *unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it*. I might make out a Providence from the general Bent and Disposition of Mens Minds, at different times, to War or Peace; for sometimes a Warlike Spirit possesseth the World, which gives them Delight in the noise of Drums, the sound of Trumpets, and other Martial Preparations, and which makes them fond of Occasions of War; at other times they abhor the very thoughts of it, and no Consideration can provoke them to it: And it is evident, that these

these contrary Dispositions do not follow the outward State and Circumstances of their Affairs, but must proceed from the invisible Influences of God, who by this means, as the Event declares, engageth Men to forward what he himself has purposed, and checketh the vain and disquieting Designs which ambitious Persons have projected. I might illustrate the wise Providence of God, by the Jealousie of particular States and Kingdoms, and the Envy of one another's Greatness, which God maketh use of to oblige them to keep the Publick Peace, and not to invade one another's Rights (as *Philip de Comines* wisely observeth, l. 6. c. 18.) I might shew a Providence, from the Occasion & Success of War, which sometimes, like a Flame of Fire, breaks out unawares, spreads to admiration, and is not quenched at the pleasure of Men. but is managed by him who is stiled the *Lord of Hosts*, until his Will be accomplished ; for, *the battle is not always to the strong*, nor doth Victory side with the greatest Numbers, but is carried by the interposition of, sometimes, very small things from above, which neither the Wit of Man could foresee, nor his Power prevent : So the *Spaniards* gained the Day from the *French*, at the Siege of *Gironne*, Sept. 25. 1653. by the means of a swarm of Flies which infested the *French* Horse. I might prove a Providence, by the surprising Rise and sudden Greatness of some Families, the unaccountable Decay of others, the strange and unexpected Revolution of Kingdoms, the Cause, Beginning, Progress, Continuance and End of Publick Calamities ; for, *the Lord is known by his Judgments*. I might attest the History of the *Jews*, and bring in their present state, as an Evidence of this Truth ; for formerly they were dignified above all Nations, and now they are more vile than any People ; they are numerous still as the Sand, and yet without Inheritance, Government, King, or Ruler ; they are hated by all, and yet not destroyed by any ; often persecuted, and still preserved and encouraged to fulfil

the Prophecies of the * Scripture. I might instance the dissolving of Alliances, the breaking of Confederacies, and the seasonable removal of some Persons out of the World, whose Life would have been the occasion of great Commotions and Disturbance to all about them. How happy was it for *Britain*, and what a Mark of the Providence of God, that the Dauphine of *France*, who was marry'd to *Mary* Queen of *Scots*, died before he had Issue by her? For if he had lived to have had Children, first *Scotland* would have become a Province to *France*, then the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth* would not have been so quiet; and lastly, after her death, the Imperial Seat of *Britain* would have been transferred to *Paris*, or become the occasion of fatal Wars and Divisions.

To prove a Providence, I might adduce the Exaltation of mean Men, and the Depression of those of the highest Quality; the remarkable Judgments which have seized some, and the wonderful unexpected Deliverances which others have met with: I might bring Instances from the Lives of particular Persons; nay, I could appeal to the experience of every serious, ingenuous and attentive Observer, if it doth not daily appear, that *the way of man is not in himself; nor is it in him that walketh, to direct his steps: but that as the ways of all men are before the Lord, so it is He only who ordereth all their goings.*

But then, if I would enlarge on all these Proofs, and treat this Subject of Providence so particularly, I should far exceed the limits I set to my self, and swell this Treatise to a big Volume: I will therefore content my self at present with the simple Proposal of these things, which are evident to any Man of Reading and Observation, and which being acknowledged, do necessarily infer an Universal and Particular Providence, and convincingly prove, that the Wise Providence of God reacheth to Publick States, and Private Persons, and extendeth it self to the most minute Circumstances of either.

E S S A Y

E S S A Y V.

In which Mens Prejudices against Providence are considered, and their Objections answered.

E*Picurus*, who fancied that the World was framed without Wisdom, by meer Chance, and who denied a Providence, is very unjustly reckoned amongst Philosophers; for how unworthy is he of that Name, who labours under Ignorance and Inconsideration, who is ignorant of the most important things, and who does not consider the most obvious and common things? Though the Methods of Providence are Invisible, and the Ends of it sometimes Mysterious, yet the Certainty of it is evident; for it is demonstrable by Arguments both *à Priori* and *Posteriori*, it is deducible from the Nature of God, the state of all created things, and from daily Occurrences. 'Tis true, there have been always some, and there are still a great many who disbelieve a Providence, and perhaps yet many more who never lay it to heart: But Mens Prejudices against the Belief of this Truth are most unreasonable, and the Objections which they propose are like the Accusations of innocent Persons, which when Examined, prove always to their Advantage. That therefore I may fully establish this Truth, and remove from Men what hinders their embracing a Faith so certain, so important, and so necessary to the peace and quiet of their Minds, their present and future Happiness, I will consider, at least the chief Objections which are made against Providence, and I will shew what may be reasonably answered unto them.

i. First then, *A Providence Universal and Particular is judged impossible; this World is thought a Province too vast and large for a single Being, and it cannot appear to the strongest Imagination how any one Being can have at once*

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116 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
under his view all the Parts of the World, and every minute
thing in it.

This Prejudice is to be removed by the true Idea of God ; for it proceeds from ignorance of his Nature and Attributes, and therefore we refer to the First *Essay* of this *Part* for a full and sufficient Answer. What seems, and is really impossible to us, and all Finite Beings, is very possible to God, whose Essence, Wisdom and Power are Infinite. The strongest and greatest Imagination is Finite, and therefore ought not to prescribe limits to the Actings of an Infinite Being. As Reason tells us, that Faculties are to be proportion'd to their Objects, and Objects to the Faculties ; that Finite Faculties can only comprehend Finite Objects : so it teacheth us, that what is Infinite, is capable of commensurating all things ; for all things that are, cannot make more than Infinite, which doth not exceed the Attributes and Perfections of God. The Government of the World would be too large a Province for Men, for Angels, or for the most perfect Creatures, or any Number of Finite Beings ; but it is not above the capacity and management of Him who is of great Power, whose Understanding is infinite, who doth great things past finding out, and Wonders without number.

2. It is again objected, *That the Government of the World would be too great a trouble to God: That He being the Highest and most Perfect, must necessarily have the greatest Happiness, and be at the greatest Rest, and therefore cannot intermeddle with what will give him Disturbance.*

This was the main Objection of *Epicurus*, and it shews how ignorant he was of the Nature of True Happiness, as well as of God, and other Things. Action is not inconsistent with Happiness ; nor is the true and perfect Happiness of Reasonable and Intelligent Beings, a lazy Rest, or state of Unactivity, otherwise a Man is most happy, when the Faculties of his Soul and Body are bound
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up with fast sleep. Idleness only pleaseth those who are sick, and who labour under the Distemper of Melancholy; and they are only churlish, inhumane and peevish Persons, who are unconcerned with the state of others, and who grudge the pains of serving them. Wise Men are best pleased, when their Minds and Faculties are employed; and nothing can be more acceptable to generous Souls, than the occasion of doing good Offices unto others. Reason, Scripture and Experience teach us, that the more perfect any one is, he is still the more communicative, the more ready and willing to extend himself, and to reach out his Capacities to the benefit of others, and that too without the consideration of Returns. Angels love to minister unto Men; and He who was greater than Angels, *went up and down*, all his life, *doing good*; nor was the pains and travel which that put him to, in any wise uneasie to him. Now, is it possible that Man can out-doe God? Can he want any good Quality which others have? Is there any thing more Divine than Goodness or Benevolence? Must not therefore these Perfections be essential to God? And must not his Goodness and Benevolence as far exceed what are in any Creature, as Infinite is above Finite? There is no Obligation upon God, except what arises from himself, to take care of the World, to contrive the Good of his Creatures, and to administer to their Necessities: but certainly his Nature prompteth him to it; and when he doth it, it neither disturbeth his Happiness, nor disquieteth his Mind, but giveth him pleasure: being Infinite, he hath all Happiness within himself, and requires nothing without him to encrease it; but if an addition to his Happiness may be supposed, it is by the communication of himself, and the displaying of his Perfections to the good comfort and satisfaction of his Creatures, especially such as are capable to perceive them. No other reason can be imagined why he created the World, and all the variety of Beings, but only that he might have an occasion of this; and therefore we

118 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*

may certainly conclude, that his Happiness is in no wise impaired by his Care and Providence, which preserve the World, support and assist the several Beings in it, and which direct them to their proper Ends; especially seeing he can do all this by his Almighty Power, without pains and trouble. When our Work is above our Strength, it is grievous; and Business is perplexing, when we want Time and Leisure to do it: But none of these things can be supposed to vex God; for all things are possible unto him, great and small things, much and little are alike easie unto Infinite Wisdom and Power; if He speak the word, it is done; if He will it, the thing cometh to pass: *The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; he sendeth forth his commandment upon earth; his word runneth very swiftly, and doth not return void, but it accomplisheth that which he pleaseth, and prospereth in the thing whereto he sent it.*

3. It is alledged, *That a particular Providence, would be a depression of the Deity far below it self, and would oblige to Acts very unworthy of the Divine Majesty. What a mean and dishonourable thing would it be for God to attend the production of Maggots, Flies and Insects? to become Captain of their swarms, and to direct the motions of such contemptible Animals? Is it worthy of God, to sit a Spy on Mens Words and Actions? to take advantage of their Imperinences? to concern himself with their little Differences? to throw amongst them bones of Contention, to cast in seeds of Zealousie and Discord? What is Man, that he should have God for his Tutor? and what are all the Transactions of Mankind, but a heap of Follies, a constant repetition of absurd and unreasonable Acts? The Reign of Kings, and the Life of mean Men, are ill contrived, and worse acted Plays; and is it proper for the Almighty to be either Spectator or Judge of such things? has he no better Employment for himself? and must his wiser Thoughts be interrupted by such mean silly Matters?*

Some think to shift and put off this Banter and Drolery, by denying the immediate Operation of God himself,

self, and establishing the Mediation of Second Causes, and the Ministry of Inferior Spirits: But this, in my judgment, doth not answer the Objection, nor remove the Prejudice, if it ought to be removed; for though Second Causes be generally used, and Angels and other Spirits employed, yet seeing both are preserved by God, seeing the one operate by his Influence, and the other go out at his Command, it inferreth his intermeddling, and the particular application of his Providence, as much as if he did all immediately by himself: And what is below God, and unworthy of him, if done by himself, is as much so when done by his direction; for either way the thing falls under his knowledge and care. Wherefore I chuse rather to say that this Objection was at first made by some proud Huff, and can only have weight with one who has a false Idea of Dignity and State, and who thinks they are only to be supported by a starch'd distance from Inferiours: Some know no better way of declaring their Quality, but by the scorn and contempt of others; they are afraid that 'twould blot their Scutcheon, and stain their Honour, if they should be affected with the Circumstances of the meaner sort, if they should lay themselves out to help and relieve them. A *Beau* would pass by a poor Man, and suffer him to perish, rather than to hazard the bedaubing his Shoes, by pulling him out of a Ditch, though his own Father perhaps, like a Mushroom, did spring out of the Dung-hill. But the Sentiments of fantastical Fops are not to be regarded, nor is it reasonable to take measure from them, who never had a just Thought, nor wise Reflection. In the Eyes of wise Men, the doing of Good can never be dishonourable; nor can Greatness shine so bright, as when it is displayed to the benefit of others. It doth not lessen the Glory of the Sun, nor doth it take from the Value of his Beams, that he shines upon the Dung-hill, and warms the Worms and Maggots which breed there. Kings do not prostitute their Majesty, but raise the Esteem of it, by taking care of the Poor, defending

120 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
the Weak, righting the Oppressed, and diffusing the Influences of their Power and Authority to the comfort of all within their reach. It is certainly *better to give, than to receive*; and he is most Honourable, who is most Beneficial.

As the Scripture plainly extends the Divine Providence to the smallest things, to the Hairs of our Head, and to the most minute circumstances of life; so this doth not derogate from the Divine Majesty, but doth manifest the Greatness of his Power and Wisdom, and the Infinite Capacity of his Essence. If 'twas dishonourable for God to look to what is small and little in our esteem, 'twould be no less dishonourable to consider the things that we judge greatest; for all things are equally inferior unto God; the highest Angel, as well as the smallest Mite, is infinitely below God: wherefore it is said, that *He humbleth himself, to behold the things that are in the heavens, and in the earth.* But then this Humility and Condescension in God, is his Glory; it declares his wonderful Goodness with his other Perfections, which obligeth all Rational and Intelligent Beings to love and honour him to the utmost of their power. We may very well admire and be astonished at God's condescension to Creatures, which he may be without, and which are not useful to him: But it is Ignorance, as well as Blasphemy, to say that any Instance of his Providence is unworthy of him; for the smallest and most inconsiderable, if any Act of Providence may be called so, doth shew forth one or other of the Divine Perfections and Attributes; by small things he shews his Greatness; by weak things, his Strength; by foolish things, his Wisdom; by the wickedness and impertinency of Men, his Holiness, Justice, Patience, Long-suffering and Forbearance; and whatever sheweth any Divine Perfection, declareth his Glory, and is not below or unbecoming his Infinite Majesty.

4. It is further objected against a Providence, with respect to Future Times, *That it is impossible, because it supposeth the knowledge of things to come, which cannot be known; for how can that be known, which dependeth upon the uncertain pleasure of Free Agents, which may be, or may not be? and whether it will be, or not be, can only be determin'd by the event?*

It is certain, that Providence supposeth God's foreknowledge of all things which will or may fall out even to Eternity; nor could the World be governed without such Wisdom and Knowledge, which Jews, Heathens, and Christians, and all except *Socinians*, have ascribed to God. The Scripture plainly asserts, that God knoweth before-hand all which happeneth in the World, that he fore-seeth all the Devices of Men, and understandeth their very Thoughts afar off; and all this not only of the Men actually existing, but even of those who are not yet in being. The Scripture also giveth manifold Instances of the truth of this, which at present we have not leisure to consider; and the same may be confirmed in part by some other Predictions, which have had undoubted attestation, though certainly many have been pretended, and imposed upon the World, which were not true or genuine. How contingent Futurities, how the free Actions of Creatures endow'd with a freedom of Will, may be known long before these very Creatures exist, is indeed incomprehensible, but we must not therefore say that it is impossible; for there be many other things in God, which we can comprehend as little as this: The Extent of his Power, and the manner of its Operations, can no more be conceived than that of his Wisdom; and we do no more understand how his Power created all things of nothing, or how it preserves all things in being, than how his Wisdom comes to know all that shall be at the greatest distance of time: Neither his Wisdom nor Power are to be limited by our narrow Apprehensions; as he doth things which we cannot understand, so he knoweth things which we cannot conceive.

ceive. Certainly he knoweth the Nature and Constitution of all his own VVorks, the Virtues and Powers of Inanimate Things, and the Effects which they are capable to produce; he knoweth the Temper and Inclinations of Reasonable Creatures, and the Impressions which such and such Circumstances may have upon them; and we cannot but allow him the Knowledge of his own Purposes, and the Means laid down for their accomplishment; and if so, we must acknowledge that he foreseeth every thing which shall be; for he will not permit any thing which may defeat his Purposes, or disappoint those Ends which he set before himself. It is indeed this Knowledge which directeth his Providence; for Providence is only the prosecution of the eternal Purposes of his Counsel. Hence it is that Providence is never puzzled, straitned, or stopped, like Humane Counsels; for Men do not, neither can foresee every thing, many things fall out which they could not have under their cognizance, and therefore they are forced to new Deliberations and Concerts; whereas God did foresee all things from the Beginning, and did consider how every thing might serve the Ends he proposed, and accordingly his Providence doth manage them as they happen.

5. Some will not admit of a Providence, because *It seems to them altogether inconsistent with the freedom of our Natures; it makes Men meer Puppets and Machines, and destroys the Morality of Humane Actions.*

As some here will not admit a Providence, lest they should take away that Liberty which they judge the Ornament of our Nature; so there be others, who out of respect to Providence, will not allow Mankind any Liberty or Freedom, but do put Men and their Actions under the same necessity of Natural and Inanimate Things; whose Motions are not voluntary, but absolutely determined by Mechanical Laws, or some Physical Influence. Thus Men run to Extremes, and let go one

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or other, because they know not how to reconcile them : which was justifiable enough, if we were obliged to find out all the ways of God, and to explain all the mysterious Contrivances of his Counsel. If there was nothing above the reach of Humane Understanding, then indeed insuperable Difficulties would be good and unanswerable Arguments against the Truth or Being of a Thing : But if there be any Modesty or Ingenuity in Men, they must confess, that there are many things which they cannot unfold ; and therefore 'tis unreasonable to deny the Certainty of plain things, because their mutual relation and connection cannot be explained. Shall many clear Demonstrations of Providence be denied, because Men are free ? Or, because God absolutely governeth the VWorld, and ordereth every thing in it, shall we contradict Sence, Reason and Experience, which assure us of our Liberty and Freedom ? Must one of these necessarily not be, or is it impossible that both of them can subsist together, because the Chain of their Union and Co-existence doth not appear to us ?

I do not see it reasonable why the Difficulties of Providence shon'd shake the Belief of it : And as to the present Difficulties, I do not think them so insuperable as some imagine, whatever Debates they have occasion'd in the Schools of Heathens, Jews and Christians. They who make Providence and Humane Liberty to clash, have not right apprehensions of either : they confound Providence with absolute Predestination ; which indeed takes away the freedom of Mens Actions, and makes them become the Actions of God, as much as the strokes of a Pencil are to be ascribed to the Painter in whose Hand it is ; and so the Evil which Men do, is equally chargeable upon God as the Good, which is horrid Blasphemy, and altogether inconsistent with the Justice and Purity of the Divine Nature : Or, on the other hand, they set up such a Notion of Liberty, as makes it as irreconcilable to Reason, as to Providence ; for that Liberty is not consistent with Reason, which must needs be destroyed

stroyed by the wise Conduct of a good Government, that is, which is not reconcilable to Instruction, Conviction, the proposal of Advantages and Inconveniences, Rewards and Punishments, and what else may influence a Reasonable Creature, and work upon its Passions.

As Spontaneous Motion is necessary to the Animal Life, so freedom of Chusing and Doing is essential to the Rational Nature. *Quibus inest ratio, ipsis etiam inest volendi nolendique libertas,* (saith *Boethius*.) That Act which is not voluntary, which proceeds not from a free choice upon the perception and pondering of the matter, cannot be said properly to be an Act of a Reasonable Creature: For here lies the difference betwixt the Actions of Reasonable Creatures, and the Motions of things without Reason; these are the effects of some External Force and Impression; or of some Inward Mechanism; whereas those flow from Knowledge, Approbation and Choice. Things destitute of Reason, are not sensible of what they do, they have not proper Inclinations or Aversions, they cannot give either Assent or Consent, nor are they capable to make any Resistance. The Sun doth not move and shine from true Inclinations to communicate his Light and Heat; nor doth a Tree blossom, spread its Leaves, and send forth Fruit, by Desire and Choice: therefore whatever Value ought to be put on these things, and whatever Praise is due to the Author and Contriver, the things themselves cannot be either praised or blamed for what they do: But it is the property of Reasonable Creatures to understand what they do, and why it is done; their Mind first consents, and their Will chuseth; wherefore their Actions are chargeable upon themselves, and do render them either Culpable, or Praise-worthy. Rational and Intelligent Beings must be free, their Nature requires it; they are not accountable, if they have not a freedom to will and chuse; without this, Reason and Understanding are given to no purpose. And as Freedom is essential to the Rational Nature, so it encreaseth according to the measure

measure of Wisdom and Knowledge which one hath ; for the more a thing is known, and the better it is understood, the more freely it is approved or disapproved, and one is the more strongly affected or disaffected to it. God is absolutely Free ; not only because he hath no Superiour, but because he is infinitely Wise, and hath perfect Knowledge of all things ; whence it is that his Will is never in suspence, nor under any constraint, neither can be determined to any thing but what is right, just and good, that is, to what his own Wisdom seeth fit. Angels are more free than Men, because they know more, understand better, and make more serious Reflections : Our Will follows the Light of our Understanding, and our Affections and Choice are the Consequences of our Notions and Apprehensions ; wherefore a wicked Man is not Master of Humane Liberty so much as a good Man, because this Man understandeth the way he walketh in, he is convinc'd that it is good, he chuseth it with good-will, and cleaveth to it heartily ; whereas the other, either like a Beast without Understanding, is driven he knows not whither, or he acts with Doubts and Fears, and some sense of the Evil which he doth ; which are as contrary to the Liberty of a Reasonable Creature as Fetters, Chains and Clogs, and are as uneasie and burthensom to the Mind, as these are to the Body.

To return : As all that are Reasonable, are also Free ; so this Freedom is not an Indifferency to Good or Evil, nor doth it consist in the being undetermined to Act, or not to Act ; but it consists in this, that they are capable to be swayed by Reason, that they can will and chuse what is proposed, approve and disapprove of things according as they are represented : And therefore this Liberty is not either destroyed or impaired by Counsel, by Persuasion, or by the proposal of what is agreeable or disagreeable : Whom clears the Understanding, what informs the Judgment, these what allures the Affections, doth indeed determine Meris purpose it is by making them more willing ; for by this men of the Freedom

Tyes are broken which fetter'd their Wills, which retarded their Choice, and which hindred their hearty Resolutions. Consequently it is not inconsistent with Humane Liberty, to be under a wise Conduct, and yet far less to be under the guidance of Divine Providence, which doth no violence to the Humane Nature, but which leaveth to Men the use of their Senses and Reason, the Faculties of Judging and Discerning, the Power of Wishing and Willing what pleaseth them, and Inclinations which can be sway'd by Reason or Interest, by Pleasure or Profit.

Providence doth not change the Nature of Things, but wisely manageth every thing according to its own Nature: God doth not move Brutish and Inanimate Things by Reasonable Arguments, or the proposal of Rewards and Punishments, of which they are altogether incapable; nor doth he guide Men by Force and Violence; he doth not use such Compulsion towards them, as is unsuitable to their State or Condition; who therefore were created Reasonable or Free, that they might be capable of meriting his Favour, and lyable to Rewards and Punishments by their own Acts, and the exercise of their own Reason. He can and doth turn the Hearts of Men whither he pleaseth, but it is by methods and ways suitable to Reasonable Creatures: He either suggests immediately what may convince and persuade, or he engageth them into such Circumstances as are most proper to influence and determine them. Thus the Actions of Men are always their own, that is, voluntary; and what they do, they ever do willingly, and of their own accord, without any respect to the Ends which God hath before him.

As External Government supposeth Men Rational and Free, so doth Providence: And as the Design of that, is not to destroy Mens Reason and Freedom, but to direct to the right use of them; even so it is with Providence, by which God wisely and wonderfully governs the World: The End of both, is to manage
the

the various Inclinations of Men, so as that they may best serve the Publick Good. Without prejudice to the natural Rights and Liberties of private Persons, a Government may lay upon them outward Restraints and Engagements for securing the Common Welfare of the State, which is also always the Advantage of every one. So the wiser Providence of God, by the juncture of Circumstances, by various Methods, and diverse Occurrences, doth oblige Men to carry on what he designs, without destroying the Freedom of their Minds, or offering violence to their particular Inclinations: No violence is done to Mens Minds; none are necessitated, without their consent, to either Good or Evil; it is still their own Wills which determine them upon some one consideration or another. Every one freely pursueth his own Inclinations, and willeth and chuseth what he doth, and therefore is either blameable or praise-worthy: but God, who knoweth what they will, what they chuse and do, doth by his infinite Wisdom so order it, that every Man's Inclination, Will, Choice, and Action, may set forward his Designs. As a skilful Player at Chess carrieth on his Project without changing the concerted Laws of the Game, or altering the steps and motions of the particular Chess-men; so God maketh all his Creatures serve his Will, without changing their Natures, or the Laws he hath established, or the Privileges which he hath granted to some above others; he can use the free Actions of his Reasonable Creatures, as well as the necessary Motions of others, and by both promote the secret Purposes of his Counsel.

Thus it may appear how Providence is reconcilable with the Freedom of Mens Actions. Men are free, but Providence over-ruleth them; they chuse and determine themselves, but it is as Providence administreth the Occasion; they have particular Inclinations and Affections which sway them, and Providence maketh use of these to draw them voluntarily whither he sees fit for his purpose: And so neither Providence depriveth Men of the
Freedom

Freedom which belongs to Reasonable Creatures; nor are the Evil and Irregularity of Mens Actions chargeable upon Providence, because there is no Compulsion used.

6. These are the Objections by which some endeavour to Cast a Providence *à Priori*, from the Nature of it, as being either impossible or unreasonable, unbecoming God, or disagreeable to the Condition of Humane Nature, the weakness of which, I think, has been made sufficiently appear. I come next to consider their Arguments *à Posteriori*, drawn from what is *de Facto* observable, and I hope to evince that they are not stronger than the other.

And First, they say, *It is vain to referr all things to a Providence, seeing all things are effectuated by natural and proper Means, and that clear and reasonable Causes can be assign'd of all the Good and Evil which befalls Men. A Farm yieldeth according to the Pains which is taken upon it, and the Skill and Care by which it is managed: It is the hand of the diligent which maketh rich; but he that loveth sleep, cometh to poverty, and drowlines doth cloath a man with rags. The prudent Man thriveth better than another, because he ordereth his Affairs with Discretion. Mens Advancement comes by their Cunning and Industry, their Flattery or Serviceableness, their Relation to some Favourite, or the Friends which their Money hath purchased. What need is there of a special Providence for preferring Relations to Strangers, Friends to Enemies? for Hanging a Thief, or other Malefactor? or drawing down Disgrace, and the Fury of a Government, upon those who are not well affected to it? And may not Twenty thousand defeat Ten thousand, without the interposition of Providence? God (as some Atheists are pleased to say) is always on the strongest side; and because they see almost all things carried on by Skill and Cunning, Fraud and Violence, Force and Power, Love and Hatred, therefore they will not admit any other Providence than these.*

To

To all this I answer, First, That 'tis true, Providence generally and more constantly worketh by what they call Natural Means, and bringeth things about by Methods that seem rational and proper to effectuate them; for this is necessary, to keep up the Authority of the Divine Laws, to preserve that Order God hath established amongst his Creatures, and to secure that State into which his Wisdom was pleas'd to settle the World. However, God is certainly the Author of every good Gift: Whatever Benefit any receiveth from anything, it is by virtue of his particular Appointment; for the Creatures can do nothing, unless He operate with them. It is still God that worketh, whether the Means used be Natural, or above Nature, or contrary to it. What seems to us Probable and Improbable, Natural and Unnatural, Proper and Improper, are all alike to him; his power worketh as much the one way as the other, and whatever be the Means and Methods, the Effects are to be ascribed to God, who alone preserveth all things, and ruleth all things; *in whom all things live, move, and have their being*; who appointeth and directeth the Operations of all things, and who can and doth suspend them at his pleasure. But it hath not seem'd good unto God, to do all things immediately by himself; or what I may rather say, it pleaseth his Wisdom to work often *incognito*, under the veil and mask of his own Creatures: That he might fix and regulate the Dependence of his Rational Creatures especially, and give them occasion to use their Reason, to shew their Skill and Industry, and to exert those Understanding Faculties with which they are endued, he hath appointed several Means and Methods of conveying the Good they would be at, and the Benefits they stand in need of: And to these Means and Methods we must and ought to have recourse for what we want and desire, though at the same time Duty and Reason oblige us to look up unto God, and to own him the Giver of all that we receive by them. If we would live, we must eat; though *man liveth not by bread alone, but by*

130 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
the word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God: If we
would refresh our wearied Bodies, we must lie down,
though it is God who giveth sleep: Neither can our Bed
comfort us, nor our Couch ease our Complaint, unless
he make them; for Dreams will scare us, and melancholy
Thoughts terrifie us: If we would have the Fruits of the
Earth, we must sow, and plant, and water; though
certainly it is God who giveth the encrease: If we would
succeed in our Calling and Affairs, we must use Prudence
and Diligence; and yet when one enjoyeth the good of all
his labour, and rejoiceth in his own works, it is the gift of God,
(saith the Wise Man.) Houses do not spring out of the
Ground; and Cities are liable to be burnt or surpriz'd,
if they be not strictly watched; and yet, Except the Lord
build the house, they labour in vain that build it; and, Ex-
cept the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.
When Enemies gather together, it is prudent and proper
to seek to save our selves by a greater Force and Strength,
though that be no certain Security; for God can make
one man chase five, and ten men put an hundred to flight.
In a word, We are obliged to use outward natural
Means, and to follow rational and proper Methods for
compassing our Designs, though the Success of them is
wholly from God; and in the use of them, we ought
to acknowledge his Providence no less than in Miracles,
and the most unusual surprising Occurrences; for though
Providence be not so visible in the one as the other,
to Men who walk by *Sense and Sight*, yet 'twill be ac-
knowledged really and equally interested in both, by
those who walk by *Faith*, that is, whose Reason is exal-
ted to the Contemplation of the Nature of Things,
whose Understandings are opened to the discerning of
hidden and invisible Causes, and who consider well the
Fulness and All-sufficiency of God, and the Vanity and
Insufficiency of the Creatures. Miracles are not more
expensive unto God than Natural Means; the Almighty
can as easily work by Wonders, as by the settled course
of Nature: But then if God should change the present
State

State of Things, if he should invert the Order of Nature, and break the Chain of Second Causes, if always or very frequently he should effectuate his Will by a *fiat*, or by uncertain Methods, which could be neither expected nor calculated; then how could Men employ or exercise their Reason? There would be no occasion for Humane Prudence or Industry; there would be no encouragement to use Endeavours, or to enter upon Enterprizes; 'twould be in vain to project Advantages, or to forecast Dangers, to entertain Hopes or Fears; then our Passions and Faculties would have little or no Matter to work upon, which would render our State and Life very dull and unactive, and confine our Souls to the dwarfish stature of their first production; for naturally Men do not grow Wiser, or improve to Perfection; they do not out-grow their first Infant-state, but by a continued exercise of their Reason, by considering Causes, drawing Consequences, making Observations, and comparing one thing with another. Wherefore when all is duly considered, the bringing things about generally by natural Means, by rational and proper Methods, is a Demonstration of the special Wisdom of God, which continually consults the Good and Happiness of Mankind: And what proves a constant Tract of both Wisdom and Goodness, can never be a reasonable Objection against the Divine Providence.

But, Secondly, Though generally Natural Means and Rational Methods be effectual, yet they are not always so; which shews that their Efficacy is not of themselves, but from Him who appointed them. God, as an Absolute Sovereign, setteth Rules, and prescribeth Measures to us his Subjects, but he also retaineth the Prerogative of dispensing with them at his pleasure: Hence it is that we often see Nature stopt, the Effects of Second Causes suspended, Natural Means ineffectual, and the most Rational Methods fail: What has been very fortunate to one, has been very fatal to another; a Jest has raised some, and ruined others; Wealth has sometimes

132 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
saved Men, and sometimes hastened their Destruction ;
some have been taken into Favour, because of their Cun-
ning and Serviceableness, and others have been kick'd
from Courts, for the very same reason : sometimes
Roughness striketh Awe, at other times it Exasperates ;
as Meekness sometimes commandeth Respect, and at
other times it is treated with Contempt. How often are
wise men turned backwards, and their knowledge made foolish ?
How often are States-men baffled ? Great Men despised ?
and Friends forsaken ? Merit is not always attended
with Advancement and Rewards, nor are the greatest
Criminals prosecuted. Two are often recommendable
by the same Action, and yet one of them is preferr'd,
and the other slighted ; and Two others will be in the
same Condemnation, and one of them only perisheth,
for the other findeth favour. It was the constant
Observation of former Ages, and it is confirm'd by the
Experience of the present, That *the race is not to the*
swift, nor the battle to the strong ; neither yet bread to the
wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to
men of skill. Some rise early, and sit up late, and always eat
the bread of sorrow : All their days they drudge for
Riches, but never obtain them ; for what they earn,
goes into *Bags with Holes* (as the Prophet speaks,) it
slips away insensibly, and all their labour is in vain.
Some grow Rich, and others come to Poverty, by ways
invisible and unaccountable ; no Certain or Probable
Reason can be given for either, nor yet for many other
things which fall out in the World. Neither Humane
Reason nor Experience can assure things ; things often
fall out very contrary to the Expectation of Men, to
the promising and probable Appearances of them, to the
concerted Maxims of Prudence and Policy. And there-
fore it must be own'd, that Humane Affairs are managed
not by the Wit or Prudence of Men, but by the Invisible
Providence of God, who doth thus often divert and
blast the Natural Means which Men use, and defeat
their Wise and Rational Contrivances, that hereby he
may

may maintain and declare his Absolute Dominion over them, and all other things. It is Man's part to be Wise and Prudent, to be Active and Diligent, and God desires it ; but it is not suitable to the *decorum* of his Sovereign Majesty, to act always at the pleasure of Men, and to do whatever they would. Men, as his Subjects, may humbly petition, by the use and application of such Means and Methods as he has appointed or allowed : but if their Petitions were never denied, like some Subjects, they would forget their distance, and turn insolent upon Majesty ; they would fancy that they might prescribe to the free Lord of Heaven and Earth, and would readily believe that all their *Acts* were Bonds and Obligations upon him, which he could not refuse to approve and fulfil : Wherefore God ruleth the World arbitrarily ; *he doth according to his own will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth* : He giveth and denieth Success to the natural Acts of his Creatures ; he approveth and disapproveth the Projects and Endeavours of Men ; he maketh rich and poor ; he setteth up and pulleth down at his pleasure ; that it may appear that his Dominion is Absolute ; *that all the Inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing before him ; that none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ?* And that he may abase the Pride of Man, and teach him his Duty, and an humble Dependance on himself, and preserve him from an idolatrous Trust and Affiance in any other thing.

Finally, I desire those who make this Objection, to consider, what their own and every Man's Experience will tell them, that whatever may be ascribed to Humane Reason and Prudence, to the Endeavours and Contrivances of Men, and whatever place may be allowed to Mens Humours, Passions and Inclinations ; yet both Private and Publick Affairs are chiefly turned by unforeseen Accidents, furthered or hindered by unexpected Occurrences, which in no wise depend on the Will of Man. Suppose the Ship never so tight, the Pilot never so skilful, and all necessary Provisions got

134 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
aboard ; yet the Voyage cannot be performed, unless the Wind and Weather favour it : It is even just so in all other Transactions, which are prospered or frustrated, advanced or retarded, according as Heaven shines or blows upon them. As was observed and declared before, Man being Rational, is allowed to act freely ; and so every Man acts his own Part, according to his particular Qualification, Humour or Inclination ; but when, where, and in what things, is not left to their own choice ; that is determined by the special Acts of Providence, which do not fall under the Consideration of Men. Generally Men are carried whither they never thought on, and engaged in business which they never dreamt of. Some have been involv'd in Affairs, while they were contriving a retreat ; and others have been driven into Solitude, who were ambitious of publick Employment. How little do Men foresee the Consequences of their own Undertakings at first ? they are embark'd, before they be well aware ; and when once engaged, cannot retire when they would, no more than he who is aboard a Vessel, can return to Land after that it is set sail, but are carried on until they either arrive at Honour and Preferment, or split and make shipwreck of Life and Fortune. What important Changes, both to the better and worse, do happen to Private Persons, and Publick States, by the Death of one, and the Birth of another, by an occasional Visit, an accidental Encounter, a Showre of Rain, and several other things which are not at the arbitrement of Men, and which they can neither foresee nor prevent ?

Is there any thing of greater importance to private Persons at present, to their Posterity, nay, to the Publick it self, than Marriage, and the Alliance which follow upon it ? This often determines their Employment, and the Place of their Residence ; is the occasion of very good or very ill Fortune, and engageth them unto Principles and Parties which contribute either to the support or ruine of the State : And yet perhaps there is no
Transaction

Transaction of Man's Life, in which there is less choice or deliberation; for sometimes it is concerted without the consent of the Parties; sometimes they precipitate themselves into it, without examining the Circumstances and Consequences; and sometimes they are drawn together by the strong (both pleasant and uneasy) Ties of Passion and Inclination, which are not capable of Reason and Persuasion, which had a strange and sudden Rise, which proceed from Causes unknown to themselves, and which can be as little explained as the natural aversions which some have to certain Meats and Scents. If Reason, if Interest, if Beauty, if a graceful Mien, if Humour, if a good Behaviour, was the motive under Consideration, I do not say that Affection would be indifferent to all, or not much stronger towards one than another; for these Advantages are not scatter'd alike equally amongst all: but certainly there would not be such a vehement and particular byasse towards any; for whatever Fancy may suggest, there is none so eminent in all or any of these Qualifications as to be singular. Perfections and Imperfections are so intermix'd, even amongst the *Belle Monde*, that an impartial Judge could hardly decide the preference: If Love was not partial, it would not take fire, and be kindled into almost unquenchable flames, upon a passing Glance, a single View, a short Conversation, and be insensible of the continued Influences of other at least equal Charms. But because Reason is no Security to Duty in the present corrupt state of Mankind, therefore such secret and particular Inclinations are, as I may say, Inspired, to determine the Choice, and to fence the Affections from wandering after it is made; and sometimes they disentangle one from all the other Sex, and oblige them to a Celibate state who were resolved on Wedlock, which makes a great difference in one's life. By one or other of these ways above-mention'd Marriage is effectuated: Persons in remote and distant places, who knew not each other so much as by Name, are brought together;

136 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
and not they themselves only, but their Friends also are
often obliged to take new measures which they never
thought of.

By these and some other Instances it is evident, that
Men have not the absolute command of themselves, nor
are at their own disposal, but are entirely managed by
an Invisible Power. Their Prudence, their Passions,
their Humours and Inclinations, their Vertues and Vices,
are indeed the Springs which move them, but not until
they be put into motion themselves, by the concurrence
of Providential Circumstances; they are as the Keys of
a Musical Instrument, which only play when and as the
Hand of Providence toucheth them.

7. It is, Secondly, urged against the being of a Providence, *That all things seem rather the Effects of blind Chance; for there is no discrimination of Persons or Causes, there is no due regard to the Merits of either, Good and Bad fare alike, all things come alike to all; there is one event to the Righteous and to the Wicked, to the Good, and to the Clean, and to the Unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: As is the Good, so is the Sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an Oath. Fools have as good fortune as wise Men, and generally they end both alike: Nay, that which befallerh the Sons of Men, befallerh Beasts; even one thing befallerh them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath, so that a Man hath no pre-eminence over a Beast.*

The force of this Argument is drawn from Justice; which is included in the true Idea of God, and is certainly an Essential Property of the Divine Nature; and therefore I will not answer it by God's Absolute Sovereignty, and by representing him as Free, under no Obligation but his own Will, who may do whatsoever he pleaseth; for the Divine Attributes never clash, nor are they to be opposed to one another. When He exerciseth the most Absolute Power, he doth not lay aside his Wisdom, Goodness and Justice; wherefore all his
Acts

Acts must be good, all his Ways Just ; and if he govern the World, as certainly he doth, then also what is here objected as it is his doing, so it must be exactly right and unblameable.

But to clear this Difficulty, and to remove the Prejudice which it raiseth against Providence, I offer, First in reference to Causes, That sometimes a good Cause doth not succeed, because of the Wickedness of those who are employed and interested in it. An *Achan* may hinder the Success of a just War ; a *Jonah* may raise a Storm to cross a very innocent and lawful Voyage ; a *Hophni* and *Phineas* will occasion the very Ark of the Lord it self to fall into the hands of the *Philistines*, the Enemies of the Ever living God : *The Lord is far from the wicked ; he will not hear them who regard iniquity in their hearts.* God chuseth to disown a righteous Cause, rather than to seem to countenance wicked Persons. It is a dishonour to God, to be thought in friendship with them ; therefore to vindicate the Honour of his Name, he giveth publick testimonies of his Displeasure, he rejecteth their best Services ; for their sakes he turneth away from his own Institutions, and the observance of his own Commands ; he abhorreth the Sacrifices of the Wicked, *all their thoughts are an abomination* ; the very ploughing of the wicked is a sin : wherefore it is no wonder that a good Cause doth not prosper in their hands. Some will perhaps say, that if this was the case, then no Cause should prosper, nor the best Cause ever succeed : But we must distinguish betwixt Sinners and Wicked Men. All indeed are Sinners, that is, guilty of sin more or less ; but all are not Wicked, by whom I mean, wilful, deliberate and presumptuous Sinners, who in their hearts make no difference betwixt Good and Evil, and outwardly live in open defiance to the Laws of God. All must necessarily be cast out of his Favour, if only such as are altogether free from sin could find grace in his sight. But it is no reflection upon God's Holiness or Justice, to favour Sinners, whatever aversion he ought to have for wicked Men :

Men: And such an abhorrence hath God of wicked Persons, that when the Cause which they are concerned in merits his Approbation, he delayeth giving it until it doth appear that he distinguisheth betwixt the Cause and the Persons; that whilst he accepts the one, he is highly displeased with the other: Therefore, to avenge himself upon the Wicked, he suffers them to go on, and weary themselves to no purpose, he baffles their Projects and Contrivances, he turns their Expectations into Despair, and makes them spend all their strength, so that they are forced to give over; and when by this he hath made known his Displeasure at the Persons of the Wicked, then he, by his Almighty Wisdom, establisheth the Cause which is right, and maketh that which was reprobated to triumph.

And as thus it appears why a good Cause doth not succeed, so a wicked is suffered to prosper; that those whom the Effects of it reacheth, may be punished for their Sins, and the Provocations which they have given God. So the Treachery of *Simeon* and *Levi* succeeded to punish the Rape committed upon *Dinah*; the Conspiracy and Rebellion of *Absalom* was prosperous for a Punishment to *David*, because of his Murder and Adultery, and the Blasphemy which these had occasion'd amongst the Enemies of the Lord. The Pride of Kings is chastised by the Insurrection of their Subjects: And when People turn insolent and wanton against the Lord, when they become presumptuous, and sin openly, without shame or fear, then, amongst other Punishments, God taketh off the Restraint which was upon their Kings and Rulers, *that they may do evil with both hands earnestly* (as the Prophet *Micah* speaketh,) he suffereth the Prince to ask, and the Judge to ask for a reward, and the Great Men to utter their mischievous desires; he scourgeth them with Tyranny and Oppression, and maketh the best over them as a brier, and the most upright, sharper than a thorn-hedge, not only to scratch their skins, but to tear their flesh. When God intendeth to visit the Inhabitants of the Earth for their Iniquity,

Iniquity, he giveth way to the Ambition of Princes, and alloweth them to kindle the fire of War; he suffereth a *Hazael* to mount the Throne of Sovereign Power by Treachery, and the murder of his Lord, to run about and ravage Countries, to set their strong holds on fire, to slay their young men with the sword, to dash their children, and to rip up their women with child.

God often punisheth the Transgressions of one by the Sins of another, that they may be the more sensible of the evil of their doings. He who went in to his Neighbour's Wife, has his own Bed defiled; he who despised his Parents, is cursed and vexed by his own Children; the Oppressor is oppressed; the Cunning, outwitted; and the False is cheated. Prosperous Wickedness is one of God's Punishments, which when he seeth it proper, he inflicts upon Persons and People: Wherefore the Wicked are called *God's Sword*, the *Rod of his Anger*, his *hired Razours*: *In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the King of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet, and it shall also consume the beard,* Isa. 7. 20. And as it is only with a design to punish and correct, that God giveth way to wicked Men, and suffereth wicked and unjust Causes to prosper; so when he hath accomplished this Design, he always, or for the most part, setteth a mark of his Displeasure upon both: *O Assyrian! the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation; I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets: howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks: for he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent; and I have removed the bounds of the people, and I have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants* like

like a valiant man, and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people; and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth, and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, send among his fat ones leanness, and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire, and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day, and shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body, and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth; and the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them, Isa. 10. 5, &c.

Secondly, This promiscuous Fate of Persons and Things, the giving thus commonly one Event to Good and Bad, is wisely adapted to our present state in this World, which is a state of Tryal and Probation, a state of proving our Wisdom and Integrity, our Judgment and Honesty. Where would there be either Place or Occasion for shewing Judgment and Skill, if things were to be judged according to their outward appearance? If a good Cause always prospered, and a bad one never succeeded, Men would be determined by these Consequences, and it could not be known who were truly Wise and Upright, Just and Righteous, that is, who acted with a sincere respect to the Intrinsic Nature of Things, who regarded the Reasonableness, Justice and Equity of a Cause, or who consider'd only the Benefit that might be reap'd by it. While a good Cause is prosperous, or has the appearance of prospering, the most wicked can be easily persuaded to take part with it, nay, then they will seem more forward than others: but when (to speak in the common language of the Vulgar) *Fortune turns*, then they turn too; when Expectations fail, when there must be a parting with Honour, Preferment, or profitable Places; when some Suffering is required: then those who had not Reason, nor Justice, nor Duty before their Eyes, shrink away; they shamefully desert the Principles they professed, and

and the Party they own'd, and pay all their respects to the other side; Gain and worldly Interest weighs down Honour and Obligation. But the Upright Man is immoveable as a Rock: He whose chief aim is, to please God, and to keep a good Conscience, is not influenced by Times and Changes; he is always the same, because he regulates himself by the unalterable Standard of Truth and Righteousness: This Man, with *Lot*, keeps his integrity in *Sodom*; with *Josua*, though all the People would chuse to follow False Gods, yet *he and his house will serve the Lord*; with *Elijah*, he will not bow his knee to *Baal*, though there be none left besides himself who doth it not; with the *Three Children*, he will not comply with the unjust Edicts of Princes, though he be threatned with a hot burning Furnace; with *Daniel*, he will not decline the open and avowed Service of his God, though he should be cast into a Den of Lions and wild Beasts: In a word, Neither *Mobbs* nor *Tyrants* can force him, nor alter his Mind:

*Justum & tenacem proposui virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis Tyranni
Mente quatit solida.*

There is no reason therefore to quarrel with this Method of Providence; for 'tis a wise Method to try Men, to find out what they are: this proves their Understanding, and discovers their Wisdom and Uprightness, and secret Sentiments; which Discovery makes much for the Glory of God, and for the Honour and Comfort of them who are tryed and found perfect.

But *Thirdly*, What is here objected, is wisely ordered by God, to beget and confirm in Men the Expectation of another Life. All the World do agree, that Justice is an Essential Property of God; and that this requires, that every Man be rewarded according to his Works: which not being done in this World, it must therefore necessarily

necessarily be done in another. Experience testifieth, that the present Life takes up the Thoughts of Men, even of the best too much; and 'twould yet take them up more, if there were no prospect beyond this World; and Reason could not give them any prospect of another, if God did execute his Judgments impartially here, if he did render to every one according to his deserving, if the distribution of the outward Advantages and Disadvantages of this World was exact according to the Merits of Persons and Things. But seeing it is not so; seeing God's love and hatred cannot be known by all that is before us; seeing sometimes there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, again there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous; that is, the one fareth as the other ought to do, if there was a due consideration had of their several Merits; nay, seeing Man's Pre-eminence over Beasts, is not in this World always answerable to the Dignity of his Nature, the Capacity of his Soul, and the Excellency of Mind which the one hath above the other: Therefore we may and ought to conclude, that certainly there is a Life on t'other side the Grave; that Death doth not annihilate, but only translate us into another state, in which we will be judged and rewarded according to our Behaviour here. It could not consist with the Goodness or Justice of God, to set Man and Beast, the Just and Unjust, in an equal level: but there is no inconsistency in delaying the special marks of his Favour towards Man, and of his Kindness for the Righteous, till hereafter. The Privilege which Man hath over Beasts is very great; and the Advantages which the Just have above the Unjust, even in this life, are very considerable; but there are greater yet to come. And the reason why God doth not fully and visibly manifest his Love towards his own at present, why he seemeth to put no difference between the Good and Bad, is, that by this they may be convinced of an Immortal State, inspired with Thoughts above an Animal Life,

Life, and assured of a Life and Judgment to come ; when and where we are to look for the chiefest Marks of God's Favour, and a publick Approbation of our good Deeds : Then and there it will appear, that all have not one Event, that it doth not happen alike to all ; then one may judge and easily discern between the Righteous and the VVicked ; then shall be manifested the wise Choice and happy Lot of the one, and the great Folly and miserable State of the other : For then *the Lord shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with equity.* In the midst of the Fight it is not proper to clap Lawrels upon the Head of the Brave, nor yet to disgrace or punish the Poultrons : And while the Play is acting, it is not fit to distribute Rewards amongst the Actors ; so the Theatre of this VVorld is no proper Place for Judging and Rewarding the Actions of Men : but when the Play is ended, and we have acted our Part, then we may expect a just Sentence will pass upon us, and that *the face of God will be set against them that do evil, but that his countenance will behold the upright.*

8. *Thirdly, To disprove a Providence, they instance the Unequal Distribution of Wealth. Some have superfluous and excessive measures of Riches, and others have not sufficient ; one Man is starving, while another has more than enough ; a liberal generous Man wanteth Bread ; and a stingy Wretch hath his Coffers full, who cannot part with a Farthing to save his Brother's Life, neither hath he a heart or sense to use them for himself. This doth seem, in the judgment of some, very inconsistent with VVisdom and Justice, and consequently also with a Providence.*

I will not answer, with some, that VVealth and Riches are very inconsiderable, and that Providence is not over-nice and curious about small Matters : This is a very loose and insufficient Answer ; nay, it is false, and therefore I wonder how it could drop from the Pen of some who used to consider other things better. If we own a Providence, we must extend it to the smallest things,
even

even to the Hairs of our Head; and sure there is none that can understand the VWorld so little, as not to be sensible, that little and much VVealth is of more importance than many Hairs, yea, than all the Hairs of our Body. Money is the Hinge upon which almost all Affairs do move; *it answereth all things*, saith Solomon. Riches and Poverty are like contrary VVinds to a Ship, which oblige to steer different courses; they occasion such important Alterations in Mens Affairs; they, as 'twere, necessitate them to such different measures, and both the one and the other do bring sometimes so much good, and sometimes so much evil to him to whose lot they fall, that we may as well deny a Providence altogether, as deny that Providence carveth out our particular Portion of these outward things in this world.

VVhy this particular Man is Rich, and another Poor, is a Secret which we cannot always discover, and therefore it is for the most part a vain and culpable Curiosity to pry into it: But the VVisdom of Providence, in distributing the VVealth of the VWorld unequally, will soon appear to every serious and judicious Enquirer. If all the VWorld were upon an equal level, if none had more or less than another, if Land and Money were distributed in equal Portions to every one; no Man could do any great Thing, nor pursue any considerable Project; Government would fail, the necessary Distinction of Orders and Degrees of People would cease; none would own another Superiour, nor would there be any to undergo the Drudgery of the VWorld; then all mean, servile Offices would be slighted, which are yet as necessary to the Common Good and Conveniency of Mankind, as the Employments which are esteemed most honourable. It is meer Necessity which obligeth some to serve; for all would be Masters if they could: It is only Poverty which compells Men to hard Labour, and to dip their Hands in Nastiness; for the Rich love their Ease, and are offended at the very sight of these VWorks by which
others

others earn their Bread, and which even they themselves must have stoop'd to, if there were none others to do it for them. If Reason prevailed, none would be ashamed of what is honest; and there would be great encouragement to such Services as are absolutely necessary, but withal are uneasie and unpleasant; for when the Service it self is not enticing, we are under the greater Obligation to them who do it. As those Members of the Natural Body, which we think less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and we make our uncomely parts to have more abundant comeliness; so it should be in the Body Political, in respect of those Offices which are necessary, but not delightful. By the Rules of Right Reason, a Butcher, a Chimney-sweeper, nay, they who clean the Streets, and do some things more offensive, ought to be preferred to a finical Dancing-Master, and some others who now pass for Companions to Gentlemen; for their Employments are more useful, and some of them so very unpleasant, that the humility and condescension of performing them is a great Kindness, and layeth a great Obligation: But so it is, that Opinion and Fancy govern the World; and the general custom is, to despise those who labour in mean things, and nasty matters, however necessary they be; and therefore, if it was not for meer Necessity, none would undertake them, and consequently it is a Good and Wise Providence that so many are born poor and mean, that there may be always some to do all the necessary Offices of the State.

Again, As Poverty and Want are necessary to engage some into the mean servile Offices which the good and conveniency of the World require; so, to stir up others to the nobler Study of Arts and Sciences, and to the Improvement of those excellent Parts and Capacities which God hath bestowed upon them. Extreme Want doth indeed sometimes enervate the Mind, and very often dispirit Men; but some moderate pinching doth rouse and awaken them to exert their Strength, Vigour and

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Skill,

Skill, which without this, perhaps, had never appeared. Some, by this, have been drawn out of their lurking holes, and forced to shew themselves very eminent and very useful, who otherwise would not have made any considerable figure. Those who are born to Estates and rich Fortunes, generally lull at home in Dullness and Idleness; they pass their time without any remarkable Contemplation or Action; like the Drones, they never stir from their Hives, only humm and breed a little, and consume what the Industry of others have gathered: Whereas Younger Brothers, and those who had no Fortune given them, being animated by Necessity, and having a Mind above their present Circumstances, like the industrious Bee, they ramble abroad, and search after those Excellencies and Advantages which Art and Nature are capable to produce, and very often return laden with more Honour and Profit than if they had been the First-born. Learning, Knowledge, Art, Skill, and all acquired Accomplishments necessary to every Station and Profession, do more abound amongst those who were born to small Estates, than among the Rich, Great and Wealthy. Necessity is a Spur to Industry; it obligeth Persons to be active, and to improve what Talents they are entrusted with. Fulness cloyes the Desires, and renders one lazy, and unwilling to undergo the trouble of Business; but Want or Indigency sharpens and gives an edge to the appetite of aspiring Minds: this prompts them to Action, this makes them venture upon Difficulties, undertake dangerous Voyages, and if it had not been for this, Commerce had not been well carried on. And this is the reason why *Scotch-men* are and have been always so numerous and so famous in every part of the World, which yet is no Reflection upon Themselves or Country; their Country is not so despicable as some represent it, the Necessaries, the Comforts, the Advantages of Life, may be had there, as well as in other Parts of the World; Men might heretofore have found there, what was desirable to gratifie
either

either the Animal or Rational Part : but People being there very fruitful, and multiplying more generally than in other places, there is no occasion for them all at home : *Scotland* is not a Theatre large enough for so many active Spirits as it produceth, which obligeth them to spread and shew themselves in other Countries, and there is hardly any Country which hath not been more or less indebted to their Learning and Valour : no Nation hath sent abroad and furnish'd the World with more Scholars and learned Men, more excellent Warriours, more generous Commanders, more brave Soldiers by Sea and Land, and more Persons well experienc'd in every Art and Trade, and useful Employment ; and if some base and rascally Fellows have also run abroad with the rest, it is not much to be admired ; nor is it reasonable that any Nation upbraid it, unless they could prove that there was never any such amongst themselves.

Moreover, if the Wealth of the World was equally distributed, if there were not some Rich, and others Poor, there would be no place for Patience, nor any occasion for the exercise of those noble and divine Vertues of Generosity, Benevolence and Compassion, which yield great Delight and Satisfaction to the Mind. The very Happiness of Riches, is only, that they render us capable of doing good ; if 'twere not for this, they are not desirable ; what is over-and-above necessary and competent Supplies, is truly a Burden, a troublesome Incumbrance, if we abstract from the pleasure of carrying it to the relief of others : which Pleasure could not be had, if all were alike Rich or Poor. VVherefore, to try Mens Vertues, to tie them together by the strict and pleasant Bonds of Gratitude and Benevolence, to give some the occasion of a patient Submission to the VVill of God, which testifies their Love to him, and their Acknowledgment of his Authority, and to give others the opportunity of tasting the highest Pleasure, of doing Good, and of recommending themselves to the Friendship and Favour of God himself, by the imitation of his Bounty and Good-

148 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
 ness; I say, for these Reasons, God maketh some Poor,
 and others Rich: *Thou shalt surely give thy poor brother,*
and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto
him; because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless
thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto;
for the poor shall never cease out of the land, Deut. 15. 10, 11.
 But then 'twill be asked, why is a liberal Heart some-
 times joined to Poverty? and why are Riches given to
 a narrow Soul? This is to answer other Ends of the
 Divine Providence: Besides other Reasons which might
 be given, VVealth is put into the hands of a covetous
 Miser, even to sink it, answerably to that End of Provi-
 dence which was mention'd in the former *Essay*, p. 87.
 N^o. 15. And a generous, liberal Man has not Power ac-
 cording to his VVill, lest he should cross this Method of
 Providence we are now upon, and by his indiscreet and
 excessive Profuseness, take away, at least where he liveth,
 the necessary Distinction of Poor and Rich; for if some
 had it according to their will, they would give as long
 as there are any capable to receive.

9. *Fourthly*, The Miseries of Mankind are brought in as
 an Evidence against Providence: *For as the Miseries of Sub-*
jects are a reflection upon the King, and shew that he is either
very weak, or of a tyrannical Disposition; so it seems very in-
consistent with the Goodness of God, to behold his Creatures
who bear his Image, groaning under so many Disasters; and
it is yet more inconsistent with his Goodness to appoint them:
both which he must do, if there be a Providence. Great
 travel is created for every man, and an heavy yoke is
 upon the sons of Adam, from the day that they go out
 of their mothers womb, till the day that they return to
 the mother of all things: From him that sitteth on a
 throne of glory, unto him that is humbled in earth and
 ashes, Ecclus. 40. 1, 3. *Our Bodies are subject to manifold*
Diseases, our Minds are often disquieted by Fears and Dis-
appointments; the Beasts are in league against us, and all the
Elements seem to conspire our ruine; and Humane Affairs
are

are so ill ordered, that they often clash and interfere, and occasion much strife, sorrow and oppression; so that one way or other our Life is bitter; our Bread is the Bread of Affliction, and our Drink is mingled with Tears. Wherefore Solomon himself was tempted to praise the Dead more than the Living, and to esteem better than both, never to have been, Eccles. 41. 3.

This is an old and common Complaint, but upon examination, 'twill be found like the Clamours of Subjects under a good and lawful King, not so very just and well-grounded; they usually cry-out of Grievances which are necessary to their Circumstances, and which cannot be rectified, without introducing what would be more grievous and unsupportable. How liberal God has been to Mankind; how wisely he has contrived this World for his Happiness; what plentiful Provisions he has made of both Necessaries and Comforts, have been shewed in several Instances. I may ask the Prophet's Question, or rather what the Prophet makes God to ask, *What could I have done more to my vineyard than what I have done?* What can be reasonably proposed to render Mankind happy, which he hath not provided? God has given us sufficient Matter for our Happiness; and if we be not happy, we have our selves only to blame, who are like peevish Children, and humoursom Servants, uneasie, fretful, and continually disquieted, though in a good plentiful Family, which furnisheth all that is needed. If Men would moderate their Passions; if they would cut off the Exorbitances of their Desires, and be content with what is Just, Reasonable and Right, they would be more easie, and would not find this present Life so miserable as is pretended.

But it is certain, that this World is not so good as was at first design'd; the Natural Course of Things is much alter'd; the Pleasures and Advantages of Life are so hedged about with Briars and Thorns, that we cannot come at them without pain and trouble. It cannot be denied, but that Man seems to be *born to Trouble*;

that many Miseries and Sorrows attend him ; and God hath wisely ordered it to be so. His Justice and Goodness also do very much appear in this Disposal of Things : First, Because Man is stubborn and perverse, refractory and disobedient, and very ready to go astray from Reason ; and therefore it is necessary to chastise him into his Duty. Prisons, Goals, Bridewels, Pillories, and other Punishments, are no reproach to a Government, whatever shame it may be to the People who needs them ; so Providence cannot justly be upbraided with the Miseries of Men, seeing they are truly and absolutely necessary to the present corrupt state of Mankind, for correcting their Follies, rectifying their Mistakes, for keeping them to their Duty, and punishing them when they are incorrigible. Secondly, The wise Goodness of God hath contrived so many Miseries and Disasters, as to exercise the Patience of some, and the Compassion of others ; so to disengage the Affections of all from this present Life, and to excite their Desires and Care after an Immortal State. If this World had been design'd for Man's Eternal Abode, God, no doubt, would have given all Satisfaction here to such as deserved it : but seeing it is not so, seeing this World is only a Passage to that Place in which we should desire to abide for ever ; therefore God hath wisely ordered Vexations, Troubles and Afflictions, to quicken us in our Journey, to drive us forward in our Desires and Endeavours to secure Everlasting Blessedness ; for otherwise it is not only likely, but evident, that our Thoughts and Affections would have been arrested to this Life, that we would have asked little for nearer Approaches to God, and would have made but little haste in the Preparation to so great Happiness, and so would have come short of what we were created for.

Thus the Miseries of Men, are no Blots upon the Providence of God ; and suppose the worst which can be said of this Life, it is not to be contemned, whiles it gives Hopes of Eternal Happiness, and affords Opportunities

tunities of securing it: nor is any to be reckon'd extremely Miserable, whatever his outward Condition be, who has a privilege to put in for Perfect and Everlasting Felicity. An Uncertain Hope of Temporal Things, will bear up a Man under great Difficulties; and what may a *sure Hope* do? a *lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fadeth not away*? This may ease the Mind, and rejoyce the Heart, & make one undervalue all the Miseries and Sufferings of this Life. Besides, as the Wisdom of God, for the Ends mentioned, appoints several Miseries and Calamities; so his Mercy tempereth them, that they may not lie too hard, and press too fore: He useth to comfort while he punisheth; and when he casts down one way, he raiseth up another, to manifest his Love, and to shew that his Discipline is not intended to destroy, but to amend. And how can one be miserable? how can any reasonably think himself so, who is the Object of Infinite, Almighty, and most Wise Love? The Consideration of being loved by God, is alone sufficient to fortifie the Mind against all outward Disasters, and to make one Happy in the midst of outward Misery.

Moreover, if Men were just and grateful, to own the good things they possess, they must confess, that they do much more than compensate the evil which they suffer: but they are only quick in discerning their Losses, and are seldom so wise or so thankful as to consider their Advantages. How unjustly is one vexed at the loss of an Hundred Pounds, when he has some Thousands left, and well secured? How unreasonably doth another complain of the Death of a Child, when others are remaining whose Life and Health do only depend on the Providence of God? What Indiscretion and Ingratitude is it, to quarrel with Providence for one or two Misfortunes, whilst many Advantages are enjoyed by no other title but the free Bounty of God? *Why doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins*? If we have deserved the Rod, we ought to receive it patiently,

and not be angry at him whose Justice and Authority oblige to use it : He that is obnoxious to Eternal Punishment, complains unreasonably of what is Temporal. Life, Sense, Reason, Health and Liberty, are common Blessings, & they are also inestimable : He who hath these, and useth them aright, can never be deemed miserable ; he can view the Heavens, and behold their Glory and Beauty ; he can breathe fresh Air, and receive the kind and comfortable Influences of the Sun ; he can walk abroad, and smell the fragrancy of the Fields ; he can entertain himself, at his pleasure, with the Musick of Birds, and the delightful Prospect of the diversified Earth ; he can contemplate God and his Works, and can meditate on his Word ; that is, he can give himself the best and greatest Satisfaction which a Rational Mind is capable of, which may make the wants of the Body less uneasie, and the absence of outward things very supportable. This Life then is more miserable in appearance, than what it is really : God's Goodness has provided sufficient Matter to render us all happy ; but all are not wise enough to discern it, or to make use of it : Wherefore the Miserable ought to accuse themselves, and not God.

10. *Fifthly*, It is argued, *That a Providence cannot be asserted, without charging upon God all the Wickedness of the World. If he knows and beholds all the Evil and Sin which Men commit, why doth he not hinder it ? By suffering it, he gives his Consent and Approbation, and declares his Pleasure in it, which is inconsistent with Holiness : Either he wants a Will to better the World, and to restrain the Wickedness of Men, or he wants Power ; if the first, he is not Just and Holy ; if the other, he is not Wise and Almighty. It therefore seems a necessary salvo for the Honour of God, to deny a Providence ; and to hold, that he is absent from this World, and doth not concern himself with what Men do.*

This is thought a twitting and pungent Objection ; but if those who make it will listen, they may have a satisfactory Answer.

First

First then, Let it be remembred and considered, what was observed and proved before, That Freedom is Essential to the Humane or to any Rational Nature : Without destroying it, this Property of Liberty cannot be taken from it. Men therefore must be Free Agents: What they do, they do freely; their Actions are their own, and they only are answerable for them; if they do well, they are to be praised; but if they do evil, sin lieth at their own door. Now seeing, without violence to the Nature of Man, without altering his State and Condition, that is, without making him something else than he is, he must be allowed to act freely; therefore his Errors, Mistakes, and Evil Actions, are not chargeable upon God, nor inconsistent with his Holiness and Wisdom. It is a Demonstration of the infinite Power and Wisdom of God, that he hath created several Beings of different Natures and Qualities; and seeing he hath created them, it is proper to allow them to act according to their Natures, and suitably to the Privileges which belong to them: And we may say, as reasonably, that God ought miraculously to suspend the force of Fire, always when it is set to a House, or Corn-field, or when it falls where it may do prejudice; as that he ought to interpose continually, and restrain Men, when he seeth them enclin'd and ready to do ill.

Again, Let it be consider'd, That as all the Force proper to be used to oblige Man to what is right and good, ought to be Rational, that is, suitable to an Understanding, Free Nature; for Man must not be moved like a Puppet or Engine: so God hath done all that is necessary, all that can be reasonably demanded to determine Man to Good, and to keep him back from Evil: He hath endued him with Understanding Faculties, for discerning Good and Evil; and he hath made Good and Evil very discernible to all who consider: *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good.* Good and Evil are so legible, that he who runs may read them: He hath given to every Man a Conscience, to admonish him of his Duty,
and

and to check him when he doth amiss; so that they who have not the privilege of an External Law, *are a Law to themselves, their Consciences in the mean while accusing or excusing them.* Some have the admirable Light of the Law and Gospel superadded to that of Nature; and though all have not had this great Privilege, yet all have had Witnesses amongst them sufficient to convince them: God hath raised to himself Prophets amongst the Heathens, Men eminent in Wisdom and Vertue, to instruct others by their Teaching and Example. And as all necessary Information hath been given to the Judgment; so, for animating the Passions, and influencing the Affections, God hath adorned Vertue with Beauty, and stamp'd Vice with Deformity: He hath made all the *ways of the one pleasantness, and all her paths peace*; and hath so ordered it, that those who follow the other, must tread Ways that are crooked, painful, and uneasy: *The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days. The wicked are as the troubled sea, still casting forth mire and dirt.* Neither the Flesh nor the Spirit of the Wicked are at ease, they can never find rest; whereas *a good man is ever satisfied with himself*: which, if duly considered, is sufficient alone to secure from rambling with the Wicked. But moreover, God hath set up and propos'd Rewards and Punishments, to encourage Men to follow Righteousness, and to deter them from the practice of Wickedness; and by his Providence he heapeth Blessings upon the Head of those that do well, and poureth Judgments upon them that do wickedly: And finally, He is ready to assist our Weakness, by his powerful Spirit; and he endeavours to rectifie the Perverseness of our Nature, by his secret Influences.

What more then can be required on God's part, for guiding Mens Reason aright? for persuading their Minds? for determining their Wills? for alluring their Affections? for stirring up their love to Vertue, and their hatred to Vice? And if after all this, if when God hath done all that was proper and requisite for him to do,
Men

Men will do wickedly, how can their Wickedness reflect upon him?

Further, God doth not constrain or necessitate any to do evil, neither doth he sollicit, entice or persuade to it; for this were to persuade Men to affront himself, to contradict both his Will and Nature, which is Holy: *Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn way of his lust, and enticed,* Jam. 1. 13. All the accession therefore which God hath to the Wickedness of Men, is barely to permit it; or rather, he suffereth Men to use the Privilege of their Nature and present State, which they for the most part abuse, but which is no blemish upon his Providence: For the Design of Providence, is, to govern things according to their Nature, but not to compel and force them by Methods contrary to it. If a King give out good Laws, and encourage the Observance of them, and punish the Transgressors, he cannot be blamed for suffering the Opportunities of doing the Evil which the Law forbids. Should a Government be accused for not taking away all Swords and Knives, because some use them ill, even to be Instruments of Murder? Because Men and Women sometimes abuse the liberty of Meeting together, to the ends of Adultery and VWhoredom, must therefore they be locked and chained up into separate Apartments? or cannot the Rulers be justified, unless they do so? And why should the VVickedness of Men be imputed to the Providence of God, only because they are left to their Natural Freedom? Because Men are not deprived of that Liberty which belongs to their Nature, and present Condition, shall God therefore bear the blame of the Sins of Men? especially when he hath taken all proper and reasonable Methods to, persuade them to that which is Good?

II. But still it is insisted, *Why doth not God make these Methods effectual? Why do not his Wisdom and Power fall*

156 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
fall upon other ways, which may oblige Men to be Good, without taking away their Freedom, as he hath done to the Angels? Was the Sin of Man a Surprize to God? Did he not know that he would abuse his Liberty? Did he not foresee the Occasion of it? If he did, why did he not prevent it? and why doth he not still remove what he sees will mislead Men to their Ruine and Destruction? Doth he not desire Men to be Happy? Is he indifferent whether they be Good, or Wise, or Vertuous? or is it without his Power to make them such?

In Answer to all these hard Questions, I say, That as the Existence of God is most demonstrable, so it is as certain, that he is VVise, Just, and Good; and consequently, that he is *righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.* VVhatever his Goodness and Holiness necessarily require, his Power and Wisdom can and will perform; for his Attributes are not at variance, neither can they be divided: Both his Nature and Word assure us, that he is good to all his Creatures, that he wisheth Good and Happiness to all: though he be Absolute and Irresistible, yet it is not consistent with his Holiness or Honour, to sport with the Miseries of his Creatures; or to have created any, meerly to render it miserable: but neither his Holiness, nor Justice, nor Goodness, do oblige him to deal equally, I mean, after the same method and manner, and according to the same measure with all and every one of his Creatures; he is not Unholy, or Unjust, though he do not exert all his Power, and all his Wisdom, on every occasion, and in every Act; it is no stain upon God's Holiness or Justice, that every Creature doth not shew the utmost Efforts of Infinite Wisdom and Power: For then there ought to be no variety of Creatures, nor any difference amongst them; then God ought only to have created one Creature, or at least only one Kind, that is, the Best and most Perfect he was capable to make; for all others, according to this, are Affronts to his Holiness and Justice. Who, except a Bedlamite, will say, that the
Creatures

Creatures inferiour to Man, are inconsistent with God's Holiness and Justice ! And is it not equally absurd, to Impeach the Divine Providence, because Man is not as Perfect as Angels, and in the same Condition with the Superior Orders of Intelligent Beings ? Should a Worm complain that it has not the Wings of a Dove, or the Eye of an Eagle ? the Swiftnes of a Horse, or the Cunning of a Fox ? Should a Mole accuse God, because it must work its way blindly under ground, while other Animals ramble at freedom in the open Air ? And what more reason would Man have to find fault with Providence, because he is not a Seraphim or Cherubim ? *Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour ?*

As hath been several times observed, Infinite Wisdom hath wonderfully manifested it self by a variety of Beings, every one of which is Perfect in its Kind ; and the Goodness of God is abundantly shewed, by appropriating to each of them a state suitable to its Nature, and his wise Purpose, and by furnishing all of them with Advantages requisite to carry them to the Perfection and Happiness which they are capable of. All are not alike, nor in the same state, neither do all partake of the same Advantages and Privileges ; for Diversity maketh more for the Glory of God, and doth more clearly demonstrate his Infinite Wisdom, his Free and Absolute Power. None can justly complain, nor upbraid him with Churlishness, as with-holding from them that which is meet ; for he hath been and continues still liberal to all, and hath afforded much more than what is simply necessary to any : But he bestoweth greater Favours and Privileges on some, than on others ; because He is a Free Lord, and under no Constraint but that of his own Will. Like a wise and good Prince of Sovereign Power, who taketh care that all his Subjects may live quietly
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and peaceably under him, but at his pleasure he raiseth whom he will to Riches, Honour and Dignity. Some Intelligent Beings have been honoured with a state of Impeccability; others were created Perfect, with all that was necessary to preserve them from falling, but yet capable to fall and miscarry: Some of these last were suffered to abuse their Freedom, and to break through those Bonds and Obligations which might have certainly determined to what was Good; of which some again are lost irrecoverably, and others are in a condition of recovering themselves, to shew that *God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and that whom he will he hardeneth*, that is, he suffereth them to proceed, until they have lost all sense and taste of what is good, all pleasure and satisfaction in it, until they have acted away all their inclinations to good, and run their wills into a tract of evil, from which they cannot be persuaded.

Freedom or Liberty of Willing, is (as has been said) Necessary and Essential to all Intelligent Beings: But the Angels are in such a state, that their Will is constantly and certainly determined to Good; the Devils have thrown themselves into a state, in which they can only will what is Evil: And man is in a middle state betwixt these, which leaveth him to the freedom of chusing Good or Evil, and in which his Will may be swayed either way, there being in this state both manifold temptations to Evil, and strong and powerful motives to Good. Now the Infinite Wisdom of God hath contrived these different states, that there may be abundant and diversity of occasions for the exercise and manifestation of all the Divine Attributes; and it is the part of Providence to keep them up, and to rule the several Beings which belong to them by different suitable methods; for what is agreeable to one, is not proper for another. Wherefore, they do not know what they would be at, they do not understand nor consider things rightly, who think that God is wanting to Man, because he has not all the

the Advantages of Angels, and that he ought to move and carry the one as effectually and infallibly to good, as the other; for who judge thus, would have God to confound the states which he hath distinguished, and to deal with those in one state, by methods only proper to another. We may as well desire Earth to be turned into Heaven, and Angels and Men to exchange their Habitations.

But though God hath put Men into a state of Temptation, which often prevails; though he doth not oblige them to Vertue and Holiness, nor prevent their commission of Evil by methods irresistible, and infallibly effectual; yet it cannot be said that he is unconcerned and indifferent what Men be, whether vertuous or vicious, holy or wicked: For he hath laid indispensable obligations upon Men to be good; he hath furnished them with all necessary and proper helps to overcome the temptations to evil; he instructs, admonisheth, entreats, persuades and pursues us with most vehement and earnest Desires, as if our Goodness could extend unto himself, and that our Righteousness could profit him, as it would our selves. How can the Sincerity of God's Desires to have Men Good, Holy and Righteous, be in the least doubted? when, besides the Assurance which his Nature gives us, he Commands it? and to the indispensable Obligation of his own Authority, he addeth Promises and Threatnings, Rewards and Punishments? when he taketh all the ways proper to move and engage Reasonable Creatures to comply with his Will in this Matter, and assisteth all that are willing? when he hath set all Advantages on the side of Vertue and Holiness; and all Disadvantages, on the side of Vice and Sin? and finally, when he hath made it very possible to be Good, and to conquer the Temptations to Evil? It is certain and most evident, that he willeth us to be Good and Holy; but his Will is directed by his Wisdom; nay, his Will and Wisdom are one, and so what he willeth, can only be effectuated by ways suitable and proper, proper
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for himself, and suitable to the Nature and Condition of other things : He willeth the Changes of Night and Day, Summer and Winter ; but it is by the Diurnal Motion of the Sun, and its Annual Revolutions ; he willed *Abraham* a Son, but 'twas after the ordinary manner of Generation, and in such a juncture of Circumstances as might be a remarkable Instance of his Power and Kindness to good and faithful Men ; he willed that Son to have the stature of a perfect Man, but 'twas by passing first through the states of Infancy, Childhood and Youth, and undergoing all the Infirmities which are incident to these several states. So God willeth all Men to be Holy, Righteous and Good, but still according to the Rules and Methods which his Wisdom hath concerted as proper for the present state of Mankind ; not by Compulsion or Violence done to our Natures ; not always by Surprise, and immediate irresistible Operations, which yet he may sometimes see proper to shew forth his own Free and Absolute Power : He willeth us not to be good, by taking away all Occasions of Sin, and Temptations to it ; but as his Wisdom hath decreed, so his Will is, that Men arrive at Vertue and Holiness, generally, by the free use and exercise of their own Reason, the watching their Steps, the consideration of their Ways, the application of their Minds to what God hath set before them, and the wrestling both with inward Dispositions, and outward Temptations, which sometimes indeed throw a Man down, but which do not, neither can take away the capacity, power and strength of recovering the victory. And therefore, if any be so much a Poultron, so lazy and cowardly, as not to use the Advantages God hath given him, not to take courage and fight it out, but to chuse to lie still, and to yield himself a Slave, when he may overcome and be free ; the shame and sin fall wholly on himself, and not on God who appointed the Combat, to bring Praise and Glory to the Combatant.

Thus

Thus it doth clearly appear, that God is most desirous to have Men Good and Righteous, that he is altogether free of their Wickedness, and that the Evil which they do cannot be imputed to him; for it is their own proper choice, it proceeds from their own free-will, which is not byass'd by any proper direct Act of God, nor necessitated by any juncture of Circumstances which he hath appointed. God is not, neither can be the Author of Sin, or any Moral Evil; nor is he the occasion of it any other way, than by creating and preserving Creatures fallible & peccable, that is, liable to be mistaken and misled: which cannot be reasonably objected; for he who was free, and under no obligation to create any thing at all, might, without injustice, give to those he created what degrees of Perfection he pleased. Nor is it inconsistent with his Justice, Holiness or Purity, to permit free Creatures to err and go astray, when he has given them what was sufficient to guide their Understandings, and direct their Motions; for as Justice did not oblige him to give to any Creature all that he could give, so neither to do for them all that he could do; that is, he is under no obligation from his Justice or Holiness to make every thing absolutely Perfect, either in its Nature or its Motions.

What then? Doth God willingly permit Sin, and the doing what is Evil? Yes, indeed. This cannot be denied; nor is there any absurdity, to say, that God did both foresee that some of his Creatures would do evil, and also was resolv'd not to hinder it. We must either say so, or, which is worse, confine his Knowledge, stint his Wisdom, or limit his Power; we must make him, like Man, capable to be surprized and disappointed, liable to have his Designs frustrated, and his Projects ranvers'd by unexpected Occurrences.

To save the Honour and Holiness of God, there is no necessity of derogating from his other Perfections: They who cannot do it otherwise, had best let it alone, and confess their ignorance; for they are very ignorant,

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and impudent too, who cannot clear Difficulties, but by denying certain Truths ; and who run into one gross absurdity, that they may shun another. But if God was willing to permit Sin, Doth not the guilt of it some way lie upon him ? Is not he accessary to the Evil that is done, who knows it, and does not hinder it when it is in his power ? This seems a puzzling Difficulty ; many believe that this Knot cannot be loosed, and therefore some will not allow God any foreknowledge of Sin ; they think he could not foresee what free Creatures would do, and so is not blamable for not hindering what he could not know or foresee. Others think to smoothe the Matter a little, by using the softer terms of *would* for *could* ; they will not say that God could not foresee the Evil that happened, but only that he would not suffer himself to know it ; he did, as 'twere, turn away his Thoughts from his Creatures, that he might not know what they did, nor how they used or abused their Freedom. This is the language of the *Borignianists*, the inconsiderate Followers of Monsieur *Poiret*, that bigotted Disciple of a Mad Whimsical Mistress. But how doth this mend the Matter, or remove the Difficulty ? If it was a fault, not to hinder a thing if it had been known ; was it not as great a fault, to be out of the way of knowing it, and to withdraw purposely, for fear of preventing it ? And how could God be ignorant either of the Actions or Inclinations of his Creatures, when he is always present with them ? Shall we make the Infinity of the Divine Nature capable of being wound up and expanded at pleasure ? Shall we hold, that God may, like Man, become Wiser by Experience ? and be obliged to Second Thoughts, and to enter upon New Consults and Deliberations ? Were all God's First Purposes blown up ? and was all that hath followed since, never before under the Divine Consideration ? How many Absurdities do follow the denial of God's foreknowledge of Sin, and his purpose of permitting it, or not hindering it ? Is therefore Sin to be charged upon God ?

No,

No, that doth not follow : Permission, or not Hindering, is not like Acting, Enticing, Persuading, or Assisting ; who doth these, is not free or innocent of the Evil which follows : but he is not chargeable, who only doth not hinder Evil, when the Person committing it was sufficiently forewarned and guarded against it, and especially too, when he could not be restrained without unsuitable violence or injury to his Nature, or the taking away some necessary privilege and property of his station.

But 'twill be asked, Why was God pleased to permit Sin, which is so disagreeable to Himself, and so pernicious to his Creatures ? Our Enquiries into the Free Actions of God, ought to be very humble and modest ; for he is not obliged to give an Account of himself, nor to lay the state of his Affairs before us : He may do or not do what he pleaseth, and none ought to say to him, What dost thou ? or, Why dost thou so ? But however, God has not concealed from us the Reason of this Conduct ; his own Glory is the End of all, and by Sin his Glory is exceedingly advanced : as he manifested the Omnipotency of his Power, by creating many Things out of Nothing ; so he demonstrates the Infinity and vast and wonderful Reach of his Wisdom, in that he can bring Good out of Evil, and make bad things serve good and excellent purposes.

Sin is, by its nature, an *Intrinsick Evil* ; and they who commit sin, are unreasonable and unjust ; but as the dark Shadows of a Picture render the other Colours more bright, and the Proportions more discernible ; so Sin shews the Divine Attributes and Perfections most illustrious ; and it cannot appear to us how we could have had an Idea of some of them, if it had not been for this occasion. How could we have known God's wonderful Patience, his Meekness, Long-suffering and Forbearance, and his strict and severe Justice, in distinguishing the Merits of Persons and Things, if Sin had not entred into the World ? What adorable Instances of Love, Mercy and

Goodness would have been wanting, if Sin had not given occasion for them? Who could have thought that the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth would have had the tenderness of a Mother, towards poor silly Creatures? which makes him not only bear with their Ignorance, Weaknesses and Infirmities, but also to endure their Insolencies and Affronts, when, to ease himself of them, he needs only to leave them? for by him all are preserved in Life and Being. If Sin had not happen'd, where would there have been place for the Mercy of God? Who would have apprehended that he could either forbear avenging and destroying rebellious and disobedient Creatures, or that he would so easily and readily be reconciled to them? Who would have dream'd of the stupendous Love of God towards Man? that He who is Independent, neither stands in need of any thing to encrease his Happiness, should be fond of an ignorant, weak and imperfect Creature! that he should have passionate Desires after him! that God should court Man in the most moving manner, and with the most affecting Arguments! that he should follow him without wearying, and cry after him, *Turn you, Turn you; why will you die? O that you would come unto me, that you might have life!* and, that he should be always ready with open Arms to receive him! This may astonish Men, and is a matter of great Admiration unto Angels; but Sin was the occasion of it. It might have been suspected, without sin, that God, and all other things, were under some Inevitable Fate; but now it appears that he is Free, that he can do what he pleaseth, and that all things are managed by his Wisdom. 'Twill be acknowledged by all that own a God, that he is Supreme, and has a Sovereign Power over All; and now it is evident, that his Reign and Government is not Tyrannical, that his Absolute Power is guided by his Wise Goodness; and that like a good King, he layeth himself out, and useth his uncontrollable Prerogatives, for the good of all under him. If the Revelation of the Gospel be

be admitted and considered, God has had more Honour, and been more Glorified by the Fall of Angels, and the Sin of Man, than by the Creation of the World; that is, his Wisdom has taken this occasion to manifest his Nature and Attributes both more fully and more illustriously: For in the Creation, indeed, we have great Manifestations of Wisdom and Power, and a certain Proof of the Eternity of his Godhead; but by the mysterious Contrivance of Man's Redemption from Sin, we have not only new wonderful Instances of these, but clear Discoveries of all the other Divine Perfections. This shews him not only Wise, and Great, and Powerful, but Good, and Merciful, and Loving, and Compassionate, and Just: This declares that he is continually present with all his Creatures, and that he has an Eye upon every particular Man, that he watcheth their steps, and ordereth their motions, and waits upon them to do them good: This demonstrates that he foreseeth whatever can fall out, and that he is able to bring about whatever he purposeth, by whatever Means and Instruments, and whatever Opposition is made unto it. In a word, The Divine Nature of God has appeared, on this occasion, with all Lustre and Splendour, and God has made Sin to advance his Glory far above the Thoughts and Apprehensions both of Angels and Men.

Nay, further, God has declared his infinite Wisdom and wonderful Goodness towards Man, on the occasion of Sin, by turning it to his Good and Advantage; for Sin sheweth the necessity of serious Reflection and Consideration; it obligeth to walk humbly and circumspectly; and convinceth us of the necessity of a close adherence to God, for guidance and assistance; it furnisheth opportunities of exerting Patience, Meekness, Humility and Charity towards Men; and of endearing our selves to God, by great and remarkable Instances of true and perfect Love, in that, for his sake, we can both despise the Pleasures of Sin, and chearfully encounter with Trouble and Persecution.

Sin, like War, shakes off Sloth and Effeminacy, and calls us out to the Tryal and vigorous Exercise of Reason, Knowledge, Sincerity, Fidelity, Constancy, and all other Natural and Moral Perfections which are the Ornaments of Humane Nature, and which, by frequent Tryals and Exercises, are confirmed and perfected. *Man*, who is but Flesh, by the occasion of Sin, has the honour and glory to conquer *principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places*: Weak Infant *Man* is dignified with a *Victory over the old subtle Serpent, and all his brood*, even *Lucifer*, and all the Legions which he commands. *Sin* has been the occasion of raising *Man* not only to an Equality with the highest Order of Angels, but to a Superiority over them: And as by Sin we lost an Earthly Paradise, so this Loss has been our exceeding great Advantage; for by this means we have obtained an Inheritance in Heaven, a much better and a far more glorious state than what was possible upon Earth.

And now I think the whole force of the Objection is removed, and it doth sufficiently appear, how unreasonably the Providence of God is upbraided with the Sin and Wickedness of Men; seeing, by his wise Management, they are made the occasion of so much Glory to God, and of so much Good unto Mankind. What the *Psalmist* saith of the Wrath of Man, holds true of all other sinful Inclinations, and of all sorts of evil Actions, *The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain*; that is, God will not, neither doth permit either Devils or Men to perpetrate all the Wickedness which is in their Heart; he will and doth curb and restrain what he sees not fit; and what he permitteth, he will turn to Good; he will so order it, as that it may promote his own Honour and Glory, and be serviceable to those who love, fear and obey him. As when a Fire is kindled, Men consult how to use it to their profit, and take care to give it a vent, and to turn the flames where the least prejudice may follow; even so
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God doth wisely manage the evil and unreasonable Dispositions of Devils and Men, that they may break-out only when and where he seeth it best for himself and those he loveth.

I have indeed stay'd long upon this Objection; but it is pardonable, seeing the Importance and Intricacy of the Subject required it; and seeing some have written Volumes upon this alone, which very few have cleared to Satisfaction.

12. *Sixthly, It is urged, That if there was a Providence, the best Men would feel the greatest Effects of it, and be most profited by it: But the contrary doth for the most part happen; for Good and Vertuous Men have least of this World, and generally are afflicted, troubled and persecuted; whereas the Wicked and Ungodly flourish, live at ease, and enjoy Wealth and Plenty.*

This has been an old and common Clamour against Providence, and it has been sometimes made too even by good and holy Men: The Author of the 73d. Psalm confesseth, that this had almost shaken him out of his Integrity, and pious Resolutions: And upon this account Jeremiah expositulateth with God, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments; Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal treacherously?* Jer. 12. 1.

I have suggested already, upon another Head, what may be a sufficient Answer to this; and because it is commonly treated of, I shall not insist much upon it: All I shall offer at present, is, That this *Prejudice against Providence* will soon vanish, if we remove the Mistakes from which it ariseth.

1st. It proceeds from wrong Notions of Happiness and Misery. We too often take our measures of Mens Happiness and Misery, from their outward State and Appearance; which is a very false and uncertain Standard. There may be great Contentment in a Cottage,

and much Satisfaction under a coarse Coat ; as there may be great Grief, Anguish and Sorrow covered with outward Pomp, Splendour and Magnificence. The Noble Roman was Sad and Melancholy while he was riding in Triumph, being (as he said himself) pinch'd in his Foot, or touch'd in some other sensible Part, which no body perceived : Many are carried in a Chair, less to be envied either for Happiness or Vertue, than those who carry them : *The little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked ;* that is, it yieldeth more true Satisfaction, than the great Revenues of wicked Men. True and real Happiness, as well as Life, consisteth not in the *Abundance which one possesseth*, but it lies in the solid Peace and Tranquillity of the Mind, the true Chearfulness of the Spirit, the Quiet of the Conscience, and the Assurance or well-grounded Hopes of God's Love ; which are not the purchase of Wealth, or Court-Favour, neither are they the inseparable Attendants of outward Greatness and Prosperity ; but they spring from Vertue and Integrity, & a care to please God. Wherefore, whatever be the Outward State and Condition of Good and Wicked Men, the last can never be truly Happy, nor the first Miserable, even in this Life.

2dly. This Accusation of *Providence*, ariseth from a false Opinion of the present Life, as if 'twere the only or chief state which Man is capable of. If there was no Life or State but this, then indeed the Divine Wisdom and Goodness could hardly be justified, for carving the worst portion to those who serve God best. But there is no reason to complain of this Method of Providence, when it is remembred and considered, that this Life is only a Passage to a better, a state of Tryal and Discipline, to render us capable of being advanc'd to an Angelical state, whither the Wicked and Ungodly cannot enter. The present Life is as our Infancy or Youth ; and we here are as Children, whom wise Parents think fit to keep to a stricter Diet, and under a more severe Discipline, than Servants ; these are allowed many things which

which are denied the other : Wherefore, what St. Paul said on another occasion, is applicable to this purpose ; *Now, I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all ; but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father. Even so we, while we are children, are in bondage under the elements of this world ; but when the fulness of time is come, God will redeem us from this bondage, and bestow on us the adoption of sons,* Gal. 4. 1, 2. God's Goodness therefore to Good and Vertuous Men, is not to be measured from their present state or circumstances, but from the bountiful Provisions that are laid up for them against the Life to come.

3dly. This *Prejudice against Providence* proceeds from a Mistake of the true Nature of Love, and the proper Expressions of it. If that was the wisest and best Love, which some fond Mothers have, which makes them indulge their Children in every thing, breed them up most tenderly, and afraid of what may give them present uneasiness, however profitable afterwards ; a Love which will not suffer the least wind to blow upon them, neither allow them to be cross'd in any thing, though their Desires be never so unreasonable ; by which means they become soft Booby's, fit for nothing ; I say, if this was the only true Love, then it might be said, God was wanting in love to the best Men : But true Love, as it hath a strong Affection to the Person, so it always consults his Good, and always expresseth it self in what may be most for his Profit. Therefore, a wise Father, though his Children are to him as the Apple of his Eye, yet he abhors their Idleness, Sloth, or Effeminacy ; he inures them to Labour and Hardships, that they may be strong and vigorous ; he obligeth them to divers Exercises, that they may be perfect and useful ; he corrects their Extravagancies, he curbs their Appetites, he chastiseth their Negligence, and useth the severest Methods, rather than not have them Wise and Expert. And it is from this true Love, that God sendeth, unto
such

such as are dear unto him, divers sorts of Afflictions and Crosses, that by these they may become wise, and perfect in Faith, Hope, Patience, Experience, and all other Vertues : He knows, that *no chastning for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; yet he useth it, because afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby.* He throweth Men into trouble, that they may become better ; he afflicteth them several ways, that they may be thoroughly purged and purified, and made more capable of Eternal Fellowship with Himself.

13. *Seventhly, It is alledged, That Publick Calamities can be neither the Effect nor Appointment of Divine Providence, because they are inflicted without any discrimination of Persons ; the Innocent are not distinguished from the Guilty, but both suffer alike, which is not consistent with Justice : nay, which yet seems more unjust, some grossly wicked Persons are spared, and some good ones are suffered to perish.*

Certainly, whatever is inconsistent with Justice, is not of God ; for he is most Just, and can do nothing amiss : *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?* No doubt he will ; and therefore the sending and management of Publick Calamities, the method and manner of inflicting Judgments upon a Nation or Land, must either be reconcilable to Justice and Equity, nay, and Mercy too, to such as deserve it, otherwise God is not the Author of them, and consequently there is no Providence ; for if these remarkable things come not from Providence, nothing else doth. But Publick Calamities, and General Judgments, bear too many marks of Divine Providence to be denied ; we must acknowledge them to proceed from God, when we consider the Time and Occasion of them, their Beginning, Progress and End, and all the Circumstances which attend them. And as they are from God, so certainly they are most Just ; the least Circumstance is reasonable, neither can they produce any effect which is not worthy of God, that is, of Infinite Justice :

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It is therefore great Insolence and Presumption, to censure these Solemn Acts of Divine Providence, or to accuse them of Iniquity ; and all the Prejudices which any have against them, proceed from Ignorance. As to the Difficulties objected, they may be clear'd and removed, by considering ;

1st. God's Absolute Power and Dominion over all Persons and Things : Every thing is his, by that Right which Civilians call *Dominium in solidum* ; and whatever any possesseth, it is only by a Grant or Permission from him, which is *ad libitum*, or during pleasure only ; for God cannot give a Right of any thing to any Person independent on Himself. Wherefore, when God seeth it fit to use his Absolute Power and Dominion, there can be no Injustice done to any, nor hath any one reason to complain of Injustice : when he withdraweth either Necessaries or Comforts, nay, Life it self, he is not unjust ; he only taketh his own, what he lent by his own free Bounty, without any other Obligation ; which may be as justly and reasonably demanded, as one may ask a Summ of Money which another has borrowed of him. Thus there was no injustice done to *Job*, suppose him never so righteous, when he was deprived of all his Wealth in one day, and stript naked as he was born : For all he had was Gods ; and common Reason tells us, that one may do with his own what he pleaseth ; which *Job* himself wisely consider'd, and therefore he would not complain, but like a Just Man, said, *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away ; Blessed be the name of the Lord*. So, suppose all Good, and Righteous, and Innocent Persons, be by Publick Calamities reduced to extreme Poverty ; suppose they be brought to a piece of Bread ; nay, suppose them swept away by a Plague or Pestilence ; yet there is now no ground of Complaint : for whatever Punishment it may be to the State to which they belong, there is no Injustice done to them ; God only maketh use of that Absolute Dominion which he hath over them, and the things which he hath given them.

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2dly. Let it be consider'd and remembred, That all Men are Sinners. The Titles of *Just* and *Righteous*, are only given to the Best comparatively, in respect of other Men ; for none are exactly Just, or perfectly Righteous in the sight of God. Men may plead with Men, but none can plead Innocence before God ; the Best must own themselves guilty to Him. This was *Job's* Errour, that he thought he might justify himself to God, as well as to his Friends ; and that he pretended, that even God himself could find no occasion of punishing him. Sin doth more or less cleave to all in this world ; *If we say we have no sin, we deceive our selves* : And where there is Sin, Punishment is due. The least Sin deserves Eternal Punishment ; and therefore there is neither Injustice done, nor too rigorous Severity used to the most Righteous here, by inflicting only Temporal Judgments.

3dly. Though God's Nature and Promises oblige him to put a difference betwixt Good and Bad, Upright Men and Hypocrites, and to distinguish Persons according to their Works ; yet we are not proper Judges of what Men are ; their Righteousness and Integrity do not well appear to us : wherefore it is great rashness in us, to censure the particular Acts of Divine Providence towards private and particular Men ; the Out-side, and Outward Appearance, is no certain Mark ; nor can any certain Thing be concluded from single Actions, because they are not a sufficient Evidence. Some may make a fair shew of Vertue and Righteousness, who yet, as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, are only *painted and whited Sepulchres*, beautiful to the eye, but inwardly full of rottenness and corruption : And there be others lying under Calumny, and bad Characters, whose Hearts are upright with God, and who study to do what is right in his sight. The most Upright doth sometimes stumble : There is none so just, but that he doth fall ; and he must be very wicked, who never did, all his life, one single Action good or commendable. Men are therefore to be measured,

sured, not from particular Acts, but the constant Tract and Course of their life ; nor ought they to be judged by what they appear outwardly before Men, but according to what they are in the sight of God : And so He only knoweth what Men are, because He only knoweth the Temper of Mens Minds, the Principles by which they act, and all their secret Motions.

4thly. It is not in this World that every Man is fully judged, or finally rewarded, but in the next ; therefore there is no reason to accuse God of Injustice, or unreasonable Dealing, when he either spareth the Wicked, or suffereth the Godly to perish, as to this life : He sometimes spareth the Wicked and Ungodly, because he reserveth them to some more severe and remarkable Judgments on another occasion, or because he intends to give them their full measure hereafter : And because he will not punish such as follow Vertue and Righteousness in the other World, therefore, out of kindness, he delivereth them up to temporal Punishments here.

5thly. As every particular Man is answerable to the Tribunal of God in the life to come, and must there and then receive according to what he hath done in the Body, whether good or evil ; so Nations, States and Kingdoms can only be judged and punished here : for hereafter Societies are dissolved, neither have they any Representative in the other world. And therefore, if God have a just Controversie with a Nation or Land, it is just and reasonable to afflict all that belong thereto, though all be not guilty of what occasioned God's Wrath and Displeasure. For, as in a lawful War, the King who is justly offended, may justly distress the Subjects of that King or State from whom he received the Injury, though those particular Persons who are seized and distressed may be very innocent as to the Provocation given ; because this is a means to bring that King or State sooner to an Acknowledgment of their Offence, and to submit to reasonable Terms of Reparation : Even so Almighty God wisely disperseth his Judgments upon all
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Ranks and Orders of People ; he throweth them amongst both Good and Bad, Old and Young, that the Nation and Kingdom which hath offended, being thus straitned in all Quarters, and pinch'd on every side, may come sooner to Repentance, and to humble themselves heartily before him.

6thly. Though it be not just, to charge one with the sin of another, which was committed without their knowledge and consent ; yet there is no injustice, in making the sin of one, the occasion of punishing the sin of another, nor in appointing one punishment for both. God may, as he doth often, both wisely and justly use the same Rod to punish divers Persons, for different Offences : Some one heinous Offence or other, of perhaps but one or a few Persons, may cause and determine a particular Visitation of a Land or People ; but yet every one is judged for his own sin, and only punished for his own iniquity. So in the days of *David*, there was a Famine sent for three Years, *because of the bloody house of Saul, who slew the Gibeonites* ; and afterwards, three Days of severe Pestilence, in which there died Seventy thousand People, *because of David's sin in numbring them* : But though this Famine and Pestilence were occasioned by the sins of *David* and *Saul*, yet the sins of the People did also truly deserve them : and so, to speak strictly, Every one who smarted by the Famine, and who died of the Pestilence, did bear only the Punishment of his own Sins. The sins of *Saul* and *David* were not charged upon others, but only became the occasion why a sinful People were punished at this time, and after this manner.

7thly. God doth not see it fit to arrest Sinners every time they break his Laws, and do those Evils which he hath forbidden ; nor yet to punish each singly and apart : but to keep up his Authority the better, and to strike the greater Awe and Terror into Mens Minds, he punisheth openly, by publick Judgments on remarkable Occasions. And when God ariseth to Judgment, he ordereth an exact Scrutiny to be made ; and appointeth all

all other Offenders to be punished, besides those who were the particular occasion of his Solemn Appearance. The Times of Publick Calamity, or General Judgments, may be called God's *Solemn Sessions*, or *Affizes*, to which particular Sinners are delivered over, and where and when it is that every one is punished for his Offences and Transgressions. Nor is there any Injustice, in inflicting the same kind of Punishment on divers Persons, who are not equally guilty : For as *Draco* said, when it was complained, that he punished all Crimes with Death, *The least* (saith he) *deserves it, and I have no greater Punishment for others* ; so, I say, They who are least guilty, deserve all they suffer in this World ; and the most Wicked cannot be punished here, by other than Temporal Judgments.

8thly. Lastly, When God visiteth a Nation or People, he doth not always intend to destroy them utterly, to cut them off *root and branch*, but only to humble and amend them ; therefore, to answer this Design, he must *spare a remnant*. And, if all be not cut off, if some be spared, there cannot chuse but be Bad as well as Good amongst them ; for if all Sinners and Ungodly Men were destroyed, none would be left, there would scarce be a Man to inhabit the Land.

By the Consideration of these Particulars, we may understand the Nature and End of Publick Calamities, and General Judgments ; and may easily know how to clear the Difficulties which occasion a *Prejudice against the Divine Providence*, either in sending or managing them. The Occasion of them is Sin ; and the Design of them, is, to vindicate the Justice and Honour of God, as Sovereign Judge of the World, to whom belongs the Cognizance of Mens Actions, and the Punishment of their Wickedness. God is the Supreme Judge, to whom Men, and all Reasonable Creatures, are accountable ; and He is an Absolute Lord, who has full Right to dispose of all things at his Pleasure : And as all the Divine Attributes do ordinarily concur together, and
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assist one another, so it pleaseth the Infinite Wisdom of God, sometimes to manifest the Authority of Supreme Judge, by the Power and Dominion of an Absolute Lord; sometimes he condemneth and punisheth Wickedness, by making use of his Dominion over Innocent and Righteous Persons, which yet (as hath been shewed) he can do, without any Injustice or Cruelty.

If there be any Credit to be given to the History of *Sodom* and *Nineveh*, God will not destroy a Nation, nor visit a People with severe Judgments, where the Number of the Good, and Righteous, or Innocent, are either more than the Wicked, or equal to them, or very considerable: If there had been but Ten Righteous Persons in *Sodom*, it had not been destroyed; and because there was in *Nineveh* Sixscore thousand, that could not discern between their Right-Hand and their Left, the general Destruction which *Jonah* threatned, was delayed. So we are told, that God put off the utter Extirpation of the *Canaanites*, because *their Iniquities were not yet full*; that is, Wickedness was not yet come to the height, nor spread so universally, as to provoke God to cut them off entirely. For though God be an Absolute Lord, yet he is both Just and Merciful, and *doth not grieve the children of men willingly, nor afflict them*. He will not inflict Punishment, but where it is due: For he is not as the Rulers and Princes of this World, whose quarrel is at Mens Persons, rather than their Faults; and who search out Faults, only that they may satisfy the Hatred they bear to the Persons. God beareth Good-will to All, and doth not smite either Nations, and Societies, or Private Persons, until he is justly and grievously provoked: he spareth as long as he can spare; that is, until Punishment become absolutely necessary, to vindicate his Justice, Holiness and Honour. Sin therefore goeth always before the Punishment; and Publick Calamities, or General Judgments, are ever ushered in by Publick, Universal and Crying Sins: If his Wrath be kindled against a whole Land, it is certain that all that Land

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is polluted; if by signal Judgments, he shew his Displeasure against a whole Nation, we may be sure, that the whole Body of the Nation, Head and Members, have grievously offended, and corrupted their ways before him. For God cannot be Angry, except at Sin; and when he must shew his Anger at Sin, he doth it impartially, without respect of Persons: His Zeal is not like that of Men, more in appearance than reality; nor doth he follow the way of Earthly Judges, who, while they give out Sentence against some, do at the same time protect others more guilty. God doth not indulge either Friends or Favourites to Sin; nor will he exempt them from Punishment, if they deserve it, and if either the Honour of his Justice, or the Instruction of others require it. *Judgment*, therefore generally, *begins at the House of God*; and they who stand in the nearest Relation to him, are ordinarily first punished. When the destroying Angel was sent out to cut off Old and Young, he was commanded to *begin at the Sanctuary*, Ezek. 9. 6. to shew that God was a Just and Impartial Judge, *of purer eyes than to behold evil*, and one who cannot look upon iniquity, that is, so as to countenance and approve it in any. Men commonly condemn only the Vices of Strangers, they excuse them in their own: but God, on the contrary, is more highly offended with the Sins of his own, that is, of those whom he has loved, favoured, and tied to himself by special Privileges: *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities*, Amos 3. 2.

But if the Lord do thus strictly mark Iniquity, *Who can stand before him?* What Man can expect to be Justified in his sight? It is certain, that God cannot be reconciled to Sin; he must hate it where-ever he sees it: *Whoever regards iniquity in their heart, the Lord will not, he cannot, hear them*. But, *there is mercy with God, that he may be feared*: He knoweth our weakness, and is always ready to forgive: He distinguisheth betwixt Presumptuous Sinners and others: He sheweth Mercy to the

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Humble and Contrite, and constantly remembreth such as have done good, that while their Sins are punished, their Persons may find grace in his sight. When he maketh the strictest Inquisition, and sheweth the severest Justice, he forgetteth not his faithful Servants, that is, such as have served him sincerely, and who studied to please him, though in many things they have offended. In the days of evil, the Good and Upright may be distressed with others, but they are not so much forsaken, nor so severely handled, as the Wicked, for whose sake these grievous Judgments are more-especially sent. Good and Holy Men may be punished with the Wicked and Ungodly, to shew God's Impartial Justice, and to vindicate the Honour of his Name, from the Reproaches which their Sins may occasion; but at the same time he surrounds them with his Mercy; he testifies a particular Love and Favour for them, which gives them Courage and Hope, whilst others languish in Despair. Calamities seize the Wicked, as the Law taketh hold of Malefactors, to deliver them over to Destruction: but they happen to Good Men, as Fatherly Corrections, as Reprimands, and gentle Censures, for their Profit and Advantage. God's Mercy tempers and mollifies his Judgments, that they may not lie too hard, nor press too sore or too heavily upon those whom he loves, and who love him. God giveth no Support to the Ungodly in the days of Adversity; he leaveth him to himself, and therefore he fainteth: but he beareth up the Good and Upright, he fortifies their Spirit, he suggests inward Consolations, and sends outward, unexpected Relief; his Providence caresseth them, and shews a tender regard for them several ways, as may be made appear by manifold Instances and Experiences. If the Wicked perish, he is at once deprived of the good things of this Life, and also of the better things Above: but if the Just Man be cut off, he is only removed from the Miseries of this World, to the Possession of an Eternal and most Blessed Inheritance. So that still the Divine
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Providence favoureth the Good more than the Wicked, even when he visiteth with general Judgments: Though their outward Lot may seem the same, yet it produceth quite different Effects to the one and to the other.

14. Whereas one of the Proofs of Providence, was drawn from the Maintenance and Support of Government in the several States and Kingdoms of the World; therefore, an *Eighth* Objection is, *That nothing seems less the care of God and a Providence, than Humane Government; for if God concerned himself in this, the Reins of Government would not be so often put into the Hands of Children, Fools, Weak and Wilful Men, who are as unfit for Ruling States, as Phaeton was for guiding the Chariot of the Sun, and whose Management is as fatal to their particular Dominions, as his was like to have been to the World in general.* Again, *If God designed Government to curb Vice, and to restrain Men from doing Evil, he would raise Good and Vertuous Persons to be Judges and Rulers, and not (as is frequently done) commit the punishing of Vice to them who are as Vicious as any, or trust the execution of good Laws to them who may be bribed, who put no difference between Good and Evil, and whose Zeal for the one and against the other is entirely managed by the Disposition or Interest of a Prince or Great Man, or the fickle and unreasonable Humors of the People.* This shews, that Government is no part of God's Care; and if he take no thought of that, in which so many Thousands are concerned, there is little reason to think that he troubles himself with any thing.

What is here objected, I acknowledge to be true; but the Consequence is neither just nor true: For we may by the same reason deny the admirable Oeconomy of the Natural Body to be from God; that its Health, Strength and Vigour are his Blessing, because it is sometimes sick and feeble, suffereth a luxation of the Joynts, hath its Nerves and Sinews loosned, and the necessary union and communication betwixt the Head and Members interrupted. Both the Health of the Natural Body,

180 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
and the Prosperity of the Civil State or Body Politick, are the Gift of God, which he withdraws or diminisheth at his pleasure. If Punishments and Afflictions were of the nature of Moral Evil, they could not be ascribed to God : but Punishments are as necessary as Rewards are desirable, and both the one and the other declare the Justice and Goodness of Him who has Power and Authority to appoint them. God is the Author of all the Good and all the Evil which befall either Private Persons, or Nations and States; and it is He, and none else, who changeth their Condition, and altereth their Circumstances either to better or worse.

As God hath given Bread to nourish the Natural Body, so he hath appointed Government to be the Support of Nations, to be their Strength and Security, the Means of their Preservation and Prosperity : Food and Raiment are not more necessary to the Natural Life, than Government is to the Peace of Nations, and the Flourishing of Kingdoms. Any Government is better than none at all, and the greatest Tyranny is preferable to Anarchy. He knows little, and considers less, who is not sensible of the importance and usefulness of good and strict Government, and who doth not prefer it to Popular Liberty : but then Government doth answer the End, and produce these good Effects, only or chiefly, when it is in the hands of Men of Wisdom and Experience, who are just and faithful to their Trust. Wherefore, when God intends to raise a Kingdom, to bless a People at home, and to promote their Interest abroad, he setteth a wise King over them, and prolongeth his Life, that he may have Experience; he encreaseth the number of their Wise Men, and crowneth their Judges and Counsellors with gray Hairs; he advanceth righteous Persons, and placeth them about the Throne, and committeth the Administration of Affairs to Men of Honour and Integrity. But when his Design is, to punish a People, to bring them low, to diminish their Credit abroad, and to lessen their Happiness at home, he either takes away
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altogether the *Stay* and the *Staff*, or he breaks them ; he cuts off, more or less, this *Stay of Bread*, and this *Stay of Water*, which supports the Body Politick, (as it is expressed by the Prophet, *Isa. 3. 1.*) He weakens their Government, by frequent changes of their Kings : For the transgression of a land, many are the Princes thereof ; he delivereth them up to the conduct of Young Men without experience : He removeth the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator ; and he giveth children to be their princes, and maketh babes to rule over them, that they may be naked and defenceless, and that they may become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies, because they have done that which was evil in the sight of God, and have provoked him to anger. Thus, by the folly and ill conduct of Rehoboam, he brought to pass what he threatened to Solomon, for a Punishment of his Idolatry ; he divided the Kingdom, and divested it of all that Glory and Magnificence to which the Wisdom, and Riches, and long peaceable Reign of Solomon had raised it. So when the time was come for humbling the Roman Empire, for breaking it into pieces, according to the Prophecies of Daniel, God multiplied their Emperors, and shortened their Reigns : By the Cruelty of some, and the Softness of others, he eclips'd the Glory of Rome, and interrupted that ascendancy which it had acquired over the rest of the Nations : Instead of a Warlike Julius, of a Wise Augustus, whose Names were dreaded in the remotest Places of the World, he set up an Otho, a Galba, a Vitellius, a Heliogabalus, and such others as had neither a Head to direct, nor a Heart to enterprize, nor Hands to act great things ; which lessened the Authority of the Empire that was once very formidable, and encouraged the bold Attempts of every ambitious and pragmatrical Person, until that vast Dominion was parcelled out again into distinct States and Kingdoms.

It would indeed be a Reflection upon the Wisdom and Justice of God, if Fools and wicked Men were advanced, by way of mistake, when he intended to save a People from Ruine, and to make them happy in their Rulers: but being provoked either to punish or destroy a People, by depriving them of the blessing of a good and wise Government, soft Men and Fools, wicked, cruel and unjust Persons are very proper for the purpose. God is an Absolute Sovereign; his Government is Just, but Arbitrary, and therefore he may appoint to Offenders what Punishment he pleaseth: And consequently, it is no just or good Argument against his Providence, that he is pleas'd sometimes to set up an unwise King, for destroying a sinful People; which also serveth to make all sensible of the benefit of good Kings, wise and righteous Governors. This teacheth People to be Thankful and Obedient, when *the Lord, in whose hand is the power of the earth, setteth over them, in due time, one that is profitable*, Ecclus. 10. 4.

As to the last part of the Objection, I say, that corrupt Judges are the consequence of bad, weak and unfit Kings, which I have shewed to be sent to a People for their Punishment. But I add further, That as this is too common in all Reigns, and under both good and bad Kings, (the best Kings do not always set up for Judges, *men fearing God, and hating covetousness*;) so it hath always seem'd to me a convincing Proof of a Divine Providence, which over-rules the Temper and Inclinations of particular Men, which restrains them from much evil and mischief which otherwise they would do, and which obligeth them to more good than they have a mind to. The Practices of Judges and People, do prove too evidently the Depravation of Humane Nature: This shews, that Men are bent and forward to evil, and that they would soon ruine and destroy one another, if they were not with-held by the Care and Providence of God, more than by Humane Laws or Policy. Moreover, the good Effects of excellent Laws,
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proceed more from God's secret Management, than the Designs of Men. A Convention of only good Men, was never yet either called or consulted, to the making of good Laws : The best Laws have been made by no better Men than others generally are ; and they were prompted to make them, not from any sense of the Justice, or Equity, or Reasonableness of them, but by other Reasons more agreeable to their corrupt Inclinations ; for oft-times the Makers of Laws, have, at the very time, been contriving how to elude them. And when Laws are made, they do not change the Sentiments of Men ; both they who have the custody of them, and others, are the same as before. The Law forbids Theft and Robbery ; but the Judge who keeps an Estate by no other right than Oppression, cannot think it a Crime : he who is daily Neighing after his Neighbours Wife, cannot believe Adultery unlawful ; he who taketh a Reward against the Innocent, must look upon Right and Wrong as arbitrary things, and conclude that there is no real Injustice ; he who pusheth Laws out of *pique*, and chiefly where he hath prejudice, must approve of Revenge ; he who can be brib'd or mov'd to sentence one to Death, without sufficient Conviction, by a stretch of Law, when it is convenient to serve a Turn, or please a Party, cannot abhor Murder ; and he who doth one evil without check or reluctancy, he certainly hath neither Conscience nor Honour, he is a wicked Man, who would do much more, if he had occasion and temptation. What then would the World be, if Men were let loose ? if they were not over-awed, diverted, and tied up ? if the occasions and temptations to Evil and Wickedness were not well managed and observed ? And who can watch or manage them, but God ? Is it not his Providence who ordereth these Occurrences, which engage bad Men to make good Laws, and which oblige them to observe them ? When Justice is kept up by unjust Men ; when Wickedness is hindred from spreading by wicked Men ; and when they who are not good of themselves,

184 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
are yet constrained to vertuous Acts by vitious Men ;
Doth not this evidently declare the Power, and
Wisdom, and continued Providence of God in the
World ?

15. It is said, *Ninthly*, That if there was a special and particular Providence ; if God did thus foresee and order all things ; if the vicissitude of Humane Affairs were appointed by him, to bring about some excellent Purposes ; he would reveal the Secret to Holy and Good Men ; and would not leave those who are entirely devoted to him, under the melancholy damps of fear and anxiety about the Event : And as this would contribute much to their peace and quiet, so 'twould convince others, that all were transacted by Providence ; whereas now there is a suspicion of Chance entertained, because no body is before-hand privy to the Design.

Mankind has always had a great itch after future things, and been over-curious to know what shall be. It is strange to see how willing they are to be deluded in this matter, and with what pleasure and appetite they catch obscure Prophecies, uncertain Predictions, and any thing that pretends to discover things to come. This is the effect of the Corruption of our Nature, which makes us more fond of Profit than Reason, and which makes us better pleas'd with the Success of a Cause, than with the Justice of it.

God's Providence is sufficiently demonstrable without this Proof of it ; and his Goodness and Love can be many other ways made out to such as wait on him. God with-holds nothing that is necessary from us, and he has liberally provided many things that are profitable ; but he wisely concealeth the Events of Things, the Fates of Men and Kingdoms, and the Success of Causes ; for the knowledge of them is neither proper nor expedient ; nor would it be profitable to us, yea, it would be very hurtful : *It is not for you* (said Jesus to his Disciples, who were infected with this common Disease of Mankind) *to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath*

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put in his own power. It is a mistake, to think that the fore-knowledge of Events, and all passages relating to our selves and others, would conduce to the greater peace and quiet of our Minds; for seeing it is wisely decreed, that both private Persons and Kingdoms shall undergo various Changes, run many Hazards, be try'd with Difficulties and Hardships, and visited with divers Troubles, the apprehension of these things before-hand, and our aversion to them, would occasion more vexation, than the assurance of a happy *Exit* would joy; the prospect of the End, suppose it to be good, could not compensate the fears of what was first to be endured. As the Expectation of any Temporal Good or Enjoyment reasonably hoped for, is always greater than what it deserves; so the Fears of Suffering, is always more disquietting than the Evil it self when it is inflicted. Six or Seven Years Misery would deject our Minds, and cast down our Spirits, though we should see Preferments and Advantages at the end of them. And if only the Good was foretold, whenever unexpected Dangers and Difficulties occurred, our Faith would be shaken; we would then begin to question the Truth of what was promised; we would entertain jealousies of a Delusion; and would torment our selves with the fear of a Disappointment, which is worse than never to have had any Expectation.

Again, God wisely concealeth the Events of Causes and Things, what he hath purposed for our selves, or for others we are concerned in, that he may exercise our Trust and Affiance in himself; that he may prove our Faith in his Power, Wisdom, Goodness and Providence; and, that he may try whether we can freely resign, and confidently commit our selves to his conduct, which is a part of that Homage and Acknowledgment which we owe to him: There would be no trial of our Patience, Submission and Dependence upon God, if our Case was never dubious, but always certain.

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Further, God keeps up from us the Ends and Purposes of his Providence, that he may oblige us to use our Reason, to follow Prudence, to be observant of our Duty, and the Laws of Truth and Righteousness; for if the Event was known to us, we should look more to that, than to these: if one could come at the Book of Fate, 'twould be more studied than the Scripture: if the Purposes and Decrees of God, concerning Men and Things, could be known, there would be more Enquiries after them, than after what is just, and reasonable, and good, which yet is more necessary for us to know. So we see, that those Persons who delude themselves with Astrological Predictions, and who observe Omens, they leave Reason, and will not listen to the Dictates of Prudence, but do precipitate themselves into that state and those circumstances which their deluded Fancy apprehended were appointed for them, and so at once they ordinarily make shipwrack both of their Understanding and their Happiness. Our business in this world, is to cultivate our Reason, to study Prudence, Knowledge, Vertue and Holiness, without regard to Events: The foreknowledge of Events, would carry us off this necessary study; and hinder too much the exercise and improvement of these Vertues, which are Ornaments and Perfections at present, and also requisite and indispensable Qualifications to Eternal Blessedness hereafter. For these, and some other Reasons, the Wisdom of God hideth from Mankind what he is about to do; and generally doth not discover to any the Designs he carries on, until the Event declare them. The generality of Mankind are not worthy to have such important Secrets revealed unto them: And as for the few good and devout Souls, the Tryal of their Faith, the Exercise of Humility, and the Testification of their Trust in God, and Dependence on Him, in cases that seem desperate, and utterly lost in humane appearance; I say, this is more profitable for them, than the satisfying their curiosity: And therefore God's Love and Goodness to them that fear him, are as great when he doth not,

not, as when he doth reveal the things that are to come.

But though I have given Reasons, to justify this Method of Divine Providence, in concealing generally from Men both what God intends to do, in reference either to Private Persons, or Publick Affairs, and also the Times and Seasons of effectuating what he has certainly purposed ; yet I am far from advancing, that it is inconsistent with his Wisdom to reveal these things to any ; nor am I of the Opinion, that 'twas never done at any time. I do not believe all the Inspirations which are pretended ; nor do I see any reason why the Modern Prophecies should be received, which do not declare any thing so plainly or probably as the Spirit and Affection of the Prophet : but however, I am persuaded, that both formerly there were, and also now there are undoubted Instances of this special Mark of God's Favour to particular Men. By Dreams, and other strange ways, some have had wonderful Intimations of what was to happen, and what did befall themselves and others. For the Reasons given, every one is not to expect this ; nor is it fit to ask it, because it is not among the things we are commanded to ask ; but when it pleaseth God to grant it, we should not slight it, but ponder it seriously.

Under the Patriarchal and Jewish Oeconomy, God did reveal himself more frequently than now : The Jews had a succession of Prophets, whom they were allowed to address in their great Straits, and dubious Cases, and who generally foretold both the Good and Evil which was to befall either the Publick State, or Private Persons. This Privilege is withdrawn now, not because God careth less for the World, but because there is not such occasion for it now, as then : To omit other Reasons at this time, Men were then in a kind of Infant-state, they did not understand clearly either the Methods of Providence, or God's Will and Purpose towards Mankind, and they had but dark Intimations of
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a Future State; wherefore they often needed to be instructed, encouraged and comforted. But now we are in the State of perfect Men; by the Revelation of the Gospel, we are made to understand the Nature of God clearly, the Reasons and Methods of his Providence, and our Duty in every State: By this, God's Love, and the Eternal Purposes of his Counsel towards Men, are unfolded, and *Life and Immortality are brought to light*, so that there is no necessity of any particular Information. We know our Business, we know our End, and are furnished with all necessary Instructions how to receive, how to manage, and how to improve all Occurrences; we are assured, *that all things shall work together for good to them who love God*; and, *that neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor principalities, nor powers, nor any thing else can separate us from God*, or deprive us of Eternal Life: which is sufficient to settle our Minds into a solid peace, and to deliver us from all manner of anxiety, except that of *working out our salvation*, and of *obeying the truth*.

16. The last Objection I shall make mention of, is taken from the State and Circumstances of the Church, which one would think may claim a chief Interest in Providence, but which yet is little favoured, and very much neglected. If God concern himself with things below here, 'twould seem as if he had set his face against the Church; that he intended to baffle the Project of founding, erecting and enlarging it, and that he resolved to fright all from the Profession of Christianity: For, what else can be concluded, from the many Persecutions, Schisms and Heresies which are suffered to arise and prevail? And if God had any care or concernment for the Church, would he trust the great affairs of it to weak, unskilful and unsufficient Persons? Would he set up for Rulers, Guides and Teachers, Men that are ignorant and contemptible, that are both unfit and unacceptable; and who want those Qualifications which may recommend their Persons,

Persons, or give Authority to their Instructions? And have not the Clergy been generally such from the beginning, Simple and Unlearned, without Birth and Breeding, without Experience and Conduct. So that the Fate of the Church seems inconsistent with Providence; and if that Society which sets up for God, cannot shew his Love and care, Where shou'd we look for them?

What especially concerns the Church and Christian Religion, I have referred to the *Third* and following Part of these Enquiries; and thither I must refer the Reader too, for a fuller Instruction about them, than what can be properly offered at present. But that They who thus calumniate Providence, and who take upon them to censure all the Divine Actions which they do not understand; I say, that They may not go on boasting till then, that the Mouths of these Gainsayers may be stopt, I will here, in the mean time, propose a short and reasonable Answer to what is now objected.

This Objection is reducible to these Three Heads; viz. (1.) The Clergy and Pastours of the Church. (2.) Persecutions. (3.) Schisms and Heresies. Each of which I will consider apart.

1st. And First, As to the Clergy and Pastours of the Church, they are judged very unfit Tools, and insufficient Instruments for converting the World, and persuading Men to receive the Truth, because of the contempt they lie under. But what is the ground of their contempt? Are the Prejudices which Men have against them, reasonable? What Men ignorantly condemn, was an Instance of the Wisdom of God; he wisely, at first, did chuse mean, and obscure, and illiterate Men; he purposely made use of Men poor, ignoble, without Authority, without the Wisdom and Learning of this World, that the Truths they preached, might appear no Humane Device, no Cheat, or cunningly devised Fable of subtle and metaphysical Heads, and that he might force an Acknowledgment of the *Demonstration of the Spirit*

Spirit and Power which they carried about them. And for the same reason, the Infinite Wisdom of God hath ordained, that the treasures of heavenly wisdom and knowledge, and that the wonderful Means of his Grace may be still in earthen vessels, even that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men. God hath chosen the foolish things of this world, to confound the wise; and the weak things, to confound the things that are mighty: and by base things, and things that are despised, he declareth his Wisdom and Power, to lay the Pride of Man, and that no flesh should glory in his presence.

Manna was a Heavenly Gift, but gathered from the Ground. To undervalue good things, because the means of conveyance are not pompous, proceeds from a saucy Pride, which deserves to be chastised. *Naaman* had been very unreasonable; neither ought any to have pitied him, if he had refused his Health, because the Prophet would not use some solemn Ceremonies, and only prescribed simple washing in *Jordan*. And if it please the wisdom of God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe; if he think fit to ruine the Kingdom of Satan, and to reclaim a wicked World, by ways and means outwardly despicable, and, in the eyes of Men, unsufficient; we ought to admire and praise his Mercy, and should be thankful to his great Goodness, but there is no reason to quarrel at the Means. If Men would shew themselves Men, they ought to consider what is spoken, rather than who it is that speaks. Important and excellent Truths ought not to be despised, though they be uttered by Children and Fools, and such as have but small reputation in the World. There is no reason to reject a Prophet, because he was bred up in *Galilee*, the Son of a Carpenter, and because his Brethren and Sisters make no glorious figure, but are amongst us in a poor, mean condition. If the Gospel be true, it is not the less valuable, because it was first preached by Fishermen and Mechanicks, and such as had not the liberal Education of the World: And whatever

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Infirmities be amongst the Clergy their Successors, yet Reason, Duty and Interest, oblige all, with the Noble Bereans, to receive the word with all readiness of mind, and to search the Scriptures daily, and to apply their Minds carefully to know whether those things be so, as is declared. *Abana* and *Pharphar*, the Rivers of *Damascus*, may be as good in themselves as *Jordan*; but the word of a Prophet can make this of greater virtue than those. *Elijah* was a man of like passions and infirmities with others, but the Character and Spirit of a Prophet made a sensible difference. The Priests who serve at the Altar, are but Men; and other Men, as Men, may be as good or better than they: but the Institution and Appointment of God, gives them Power and Authority, and renders them useful above all others; and who so despise them or their Ministry, do despise the Wisdom of God, who has purposed this way to manifest his Power and Authority, his Mercy and Goodness.

I will not now enquire into the Grounds of the present Contempt of the Clergy, nor will I examine all the Prejudices which Men have against their Persons and Office; for 'twould be too great a Digression: But sure, Ignorance is unjustly charged upon the Body of them; as Men may be very capable to teach sound Doctrine, though they be not Mathematicians and Philosophers, and studied in all the learning of the Egyptians, and ancient Gracians. And suppose these and other Accomplishments were more useful, and more necessary, they are at least in as great measure amongst the Clergy, as amongst any other sort of People: Atheists, Deists, and the rest of that Gang, are not superiour to them in Sense, Learning, or solid Knowledge and Judgment, though indeed they have by far a greater Stock of Impudence; and it is only by their insufferable Impudence that they obtrude their thin Reasons, their false Notions, their new and singular Concoits, upon simple, inconsiderate and unthinking Men. Even as a Mountebank draweth numbers from an old Experienc'd Physician, and as the headless Multitude foolishly

foolishly believe his *Salves* and *Cures* to be good and better than others, because his *Jack-pudding* can Act a *Farce* well; so some, who are not at the pains to examine, as falsely conclude, that Reason and Truth are only with those who Assert boldly, and break a Jest handsomly. There be some important things *hid from the Wise and Prudent*, which yet the Wisdom of God thinks fit to reveal unto *Babes*. Some may be qualified enough to give Rules for cultivating *Humane Understanding*, and yet be ignorant of the *Mysterium of the Gospel*. He who is right in one thing, is not always right and reasonable in every thing; as one may be guilty of some weaknesses, and yet skilful and knowing in very useful and certain matters. *Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.* Not because the Doctrine of Christianity cannot bear the Test of these, nor will it suffer an Enquiry; but because they will not humbly rely upon God, and do oppose their Understanding to Infinite Wisdom. True Wisdom and Knowledge cannot misguide us, nor carry us off from God; but *vain Philosophy*, and a *Wisdom falsely so called*, may, and often doth. *The world, once, through wisdom, knew not God*; and it is to be feared, that the time is drawing near, when the World shall relapse into the same fatal Ignorance, by the very same means. *That the Soul be without knowledge, is not good*: but the most precious Knowledge, lies like the Treasures of the Earth, and must be digged and searched after, by humble Labour, and modest Enquiries: A proud, luxurious and wanton Mind, is not qualified to undertake it.

It is most apparent, that there is at present, a General Confederacy against the Order of Priesthood: Spite and Malice have entred into a League with Wit, for running it down. The Personal Faults of Men are served to the Office, that when it is set up, it may be laugh'd at. The Miscarriages of Clergy-men, are not
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distinguished from the divine and commanded *Acts* of their *Ministry*, but both are jumbled together into the common Term of *Priest-craft*, which is hastily condemned, and unjustly exposed; which every insolent T—d, and ill-manner'd Blockhead, takes liberty to throw at; and which others not only allow, but forward, their Prejudice making them forget their Sence and their Honour. Wit, Sence, and Observation, are not incompatible with a *Cassock*, some who wear it, have their common share of them, and so could, if they thought it just and proper to use the same method, take revenge on all Trades and Professions, and upon all Orders of Men, even from the highest to the lowest. But 'twere better to be without Wit, than to make it serve only to level the World, and to explode all necessary and useful Institutions; and whatever Wit one hath, certainly he hath little solid Judgment, who is jested out of his Reason and Interest, and who is as much influenc'd by a *Witticism*, as by grave and weighty Considerations. As small and light Bodies are only moved and carried away by a breath of Air, so they are only weak Heads who are shaken with Wit. Should we fall out with our selves, complain of our Creation, or wish to be turned into Hogs, because of *Rocheſter's Satyr upon Man*? or is Vice in any wise more reasonable, since the *other* against *Vertue*. But I will not insist upon this. I crave leave to offer Two things humbly to the Consideration of all serious Persons.

1st. That a War with Priests, as Priests, is a War with God himself; *This* usually commenceth with *That*. Hatred to Priests, either proceeds from, or ends in Ungodliness and Impiety. The Cudgels are pretended to be taken up against Men only, but the Blows are intended and directed farther; therefore they who are engaged, do find themselves unawares encountred by the Sword of the Lord: *Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also*
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shall be taken away; for thy people are as they that strive with the priest: therefore thou shalt fall in the day, the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother. They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people till there was no remedy, Hos. 4. 2 Chron. 34. 16. Another thing I have to say, is, That nothing can be more fatal to a Nation or People, than when they who hold the Office of Priesthood amongst them, are really contemptible either in their Persons or Actions: It is a great Punishment in it self, and the greatest Sign and Preparation that can be, either of Spiritual or Temporal Judgments. The Priests are design'd to be Intercessors betwixt God and the People: And what can be worse, than either to be without Intercessors, or to have those who cannot prevail? A Nation then which hath like People like Priest, is fitted and designed for Destruction. *All the beasts of the field come to devour; yea, all the beasts in the forest: For, His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber; yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds which cannot understand; they all look to his own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter, Isa. 56. 9.* Wherefore, a People in this case, instead of insulting over their Priests and Clergy, they ought to lament and mourn; they have all reason to be afraid of the Judgments of God; and they should turn their Indignation chiefly against Themselves, against their Sins and Transgressions, against their contempt of God's Messages, against their disobedience to the Truth, and what else they are guilty of, which has thus provoked God to take away their Guides, or to punish them with blind and unfit ones, and to remove from among them such as should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before him for the land, that he should not destroy it.

But to return to the Second Head of Persecutions: They are not only permitted, but sent by God; his
Wisdom

Wisdom appoints them, to render the Church glorious, whose Glory lies not in outward Pomp and Splendour, which belongs to the *Civil States* of the World; but in conquering Difficulties, resisting Temptations, bearing up under great Discouragements, and standing firm, notwithstanding all the Devices, Plots and Conspiracies of Devils and wicked Men to overthrow it: This shews that the Church is not from Earth, but from Heaven: This proves it to be the *House of the Ever-living God*, which he will maintain; the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, which neither Humane nor Infernal Power can break or destroy. Moreover, the Glory and Splendour of the Church consists in the Devotion and Sanctity of its Members, to which Persecutions are not a little contributive: Much Peace maketh them like the Men of *Laiſh*, careless, quiet, and secure, so that they lie too open to those Enemies who would invade their Vertue and Integrity; whereas Persecutions awaken them, rouse their Courage, and put them upon their Guard. When the Church is at ease, Christians, as *Moab* did, settle upon the Lees of this World, and they are separated and purged by the Persecutions which happen. The Church is God's Vineyard; Christians are the Vines; and Persecutions are God's Pruning-knife, by which he loppeth off those Branches which are withered, and rendreth the other both more beautiful and fruitful. Persecutions do, indeed, make fewer Christians, but they also make them much better; they carry off Hypocrites, but they leave the Sincere, and cause them to be more sincere, to be more devout, to be more denied to the World and Sin, to be more fervent and heavenly-minded. If all, or most who belong to the Church, though they be few, be sincere and upright, good and holy, it makes more for the Interest and Glory of the Church, than if 'twere largely extended, and filled with Multitudes.

Further; It is to be considered, That Persecutions are good and profitable to the Church; not only in that

they contribute to Sanctifie its Members, but also because they promote the Purity of its Constitution, and either prevent or rectifie those Errors which, in peaceable Times, creep into its Doctrine, VVorship and Discipline. VVhen the Church was Persecuted, its Doctrine was Sound, its VVorship Pure, and its Discipline Strict and Exact; because then all watched carefully, used more caution, and were acted with true Zeal to please God, which made them less curious to please the Humours and Passions of Men; whereas since the Church contracted an alliance with Earthly Powers, the Door of the Church has not been well guarded; Men have been admitted, whose Faith was not sound, nor their Hearts pure; unwarrantable Encroachments have been suffered and connived at, and its Doctrine, Worship and Discipline have been too much modelled to serve the Humour and Interest of States, which is an unworthy perverting and abusing them, and which is the reason why the Unity of the Church is so much broken: The Church is one, one Rule, one Doctrine is for all, all should have the same Mind, the same Spirit, and speak the same Things, because they are all Disciples of one and the same Master, have one Calling, and ought to carry on the same Design; but now the several Churches speak different Things, because they speak and act each of them according to the different Interests of the several States with which they are embarked. This, and some other Abuses which are deeply rooted both in *Romish* and *Reformed Churches*, in Humane appearance, will not be rectified without a Persecution. Persecutions are as good, and sometimes as necessary to the Church, as Afflictions to private Persons: neither of them are signs of Hatred, nor inconsistent with Love; but both are testimonies of the Divine Affection, and both are attended with divers Advantages, as could be shewed by many Instances: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* The Condition of the Church, in this World, is Militant, hereafter it shall be Triumphant; now it is in its state of Humilia-

Humiliation, but hereafter it shall be exalted to Glory, Dignity and Power, when all the Kingdoms and States of the VVorld shall be utterly dissolved.

As to the Third and last Head of this Objection, namely *Schisms* and *Heresies*; they are indeed in themselves damnable and pernicious things, and they do occasion the fall and stumbling of many; therefore, *Woe be to him by whom they come*: Yet, *There must be also divisions and heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you.* God wisely permitteth them, and his VVisdom draweth a great deal of good out of them: As we observed before of Sin, so God causeth Errors, false Doctrine, and unreasonable and unlawful Divisions, conduce to the great Advantage of the Church, and also of private Persons, even of all who humbly wait upon him, and commit themselves to his conduct. *Heresies* and *Schisms* are a Test for Proving and Trying Men; hereby it appears whether their Faith be firm, their Affection to the Truth stedfast and fixed, or if they have unsettled Minds, and wavering Resolutions; hereby is known the Motive upon which Men embrace the Faith, whether the Authority of God or Men bears the greatest weight, whether Truth it self, or Names, or Popular Applause, are most regarded: This manifests who are rooted and built up in God, who are stablished in Faith and Love, and who are the *unstable and unlearned, who wrest things to their own destruction*; and who are as Clouds without VVater, carried about with every puff of VVind: In a word, this distinguisheth betwixt the Precious and Vile, the VVheat and Chaff, and sheweth what Spirit and Principles Men are of, which maketh for the Glory of God, the Honour and Comfort of them who endure the Tryal, and which is necessary to the Manifestation of God's Righteous Judgment in the Life to come. *God knoweth them that are his*; he understandeth the frame and temper of all Men's Hearts, and is to judge them according to this, as well as their outward Deeds; nay, rather according to that than these,

198 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*

because our Deeds and Actions are not good ; but when they proceed from a Heart that is right and honest, and Principles that are just and true : therefore, that *God may be justified when he speaketh, and clear when he judgeth,* and that it may appear *he is no respecter of persons,* he ordereth these Occasions of Tryal and Discrimination, which make Men known to themselves, and to all those before whom they are to be judged. And because the Acknowledgment of God's Authority and Veracity is not only essential to a Righteous Man, but the first and great Principle of Righteousness it self ; therefore, to make the greater tryal of our Obedience, for a greater Proof of our Sincerity, our Trust in him, and Dependance upon him, he both sometimes declares his Will by insufficient Instruments, by Persons very obnoxious ; and also he suffereth what he has commanded and revealed, to be contradicted and gain-say'd by Men of Name and Reputation, who make a Noise and Figure in the World, by their Power and Authority, their Learning and Wisdom, and by some pretended Sanctity, and outward *Forms of Godliness* : Satan, the great Deceiver, is sometimes allowed to *transform himself into an Angel of Light.* This is a great Tryal, but it may be endured ; it is a strong Temptation, but it may be resisted : For God is to be believed rather than Man, nay, above Angels ; his Authority is of more weight than all in Heaven, Earth, or Hell ; He cannot deceive us, others may. And his Will is obvious ; he speaketh plainly, that we may perceive it : if we listen and consider, *if we do all the known will of God,* we shall understand *whether the Doctrine be of God,* and what it is that he saith to us. But the words of Deceivers are cunning and subtle, they speak hard and amusing things, that they may the more easily draw away the Simple and Inconsiderate : *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder ; and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake to thee, saying, Let us go after other Gods (which thou hast not known) and let us serve them ;*
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thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, nor of that dreamer of dreams ; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul. And as no Wonder should be believed, in contradiction to God, his Nature, his express Will, his plain Assertions ; so neither Learning, nor Wisdom, nor Humane or Angelical Authorities.

Again, As *Heresies* and *Schisms* do thus serve to try the Temper and Sincerity of Men's Minds ; so they are of use to oblige us to search out the Truth, and to exercise our Judgments, that by trying and examining those things which differ, they may be capable to approve the things which are excellent. God permitteth Schisms and Heresies to arise in his Church, as he did preserve a Remnant of the Heathen Nations in *Canaan* ; not only to prove and punish his own People as there was occasion, but to exercise them to War, that they might be strong, and valourous, and active, and wise. A People who have been long without War, usually degenerate, they turn soft and effeminate ; and where there has been no Spiritual War, no occasion of debating Heresies and Schisms, People generally are ignorant of the Truth, and dull to receive it. As the Strength and Vigour of our Bodies are encreased by Labour and Exercise, so our Understandings and Judgments are perfected the same way ; by frequent Study, and continued Application, they become able to judge, quick to discern, and capable both to penetrate into Difficulties, and also to resolve them. And as by this means our Minds are rendered more capable of Divine Truths, so we are engaged to search and find them out, which otherwise, perhaps, would not have been known ; even as War, and the Difficulties which it puts People to, have been the occasion of many useful Inventions, and have discovered what admirable things Wit, Reason and Industry can do, which the Authors themselves had not dream'd of, if these Circumstances had not set them on. Many Im-

portant Truths had been lost, Common Truths neither duely valued, nor well understood, nor the Reasons of them sufficiently known, if the Ignorance of some, the vain Pride and affected Singularity of others, the Covetousness and Ambition of a third sort, had not opposed and contradicted them. I could give several Instances, but I will not anticipate what is more proper for the *following Part*; only I may freely say, without declaring a Byasse for either Side, That whatever Inconveniences have happened to *Civil States*, by that *Separation* from the *Church of Rome* about Two hundred Years ago, it hath been of very great Advantage to *Truth*, which in many Particulars has been more enquired into, and better cleared since, than 'twas for many hundreds of Years before. What Learned Discoveries of Antiquity, what Judicious Commentaries upon the Scripture, and how many Accurate Treatises upon particular Subjects hath this *Separation* occasioned, and produced from both *Sides*? When there is no Debate, no Contradiction, no manner of Opposition, then People never enquire into the Grounds and Reasons of Things, they cannot answer any one who asketh them a Reason for the hope that is in them; but lazily and implicitly receive what is said to them, which gives not Truths their full force and influence, as when the nature, and certainty, and importance of them are fully known, and seriously considered. A Child may be taught *Truths*, and believe them upon his Father's Authority; but he who has no other Evidence for what he believes, cannot have that value for them, nor is it to be expected that he will run such a hazard in the defence of them, as one who wisely understandeth and perfectly knoweth the Faith and Principles which he professeth.

But though these Advantages may be drawn from Heresies and Schisms, and that God doth wisely permit them for these good Ends; yet the case is alter'd, when they encrease, spread, abound, and draw off Multitudes: When these *Tares* multiply beyond the good
Wheat;

Wheat; when they are suffered to cover the Ground, that the good Seed can neither grow up nor appear; then they are sent and inflicted, neither for a Tryal, nor for our Profit, but for a Punishment, and then they are certain Indications of God's heavy Displeasure, and of his having sold that Nation, or People where this happens, to utter Destruction, without Mercy. Spiritual Judgments are sorer than Temporal; these only strike at the Body, and the Things of this present Life; but the other strike at the Soul, and are designed to deprive us of the Life to come. Temporal Calamities may proceed from Love; but the giving up to Spiritual Blindness, to Error, and damnable Heresies, shews a total Aversion, an irreconcilable Hatred, and a fixed Resolution not to save, or to do any act of Kindness; because these things render a Man altogether incapable of the Divine Favour, and obnoxious to his Wrath, both in this World, and in the next: *Go and make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed.* A Remnant of the Seven Nations were left amongst the Jews, *to be thorns in their side*, to awaken them to their Duty, and to oblige them to take heed to themselves: but when God was highly provoked, he suffered that Remnant to usurp the Dominion, and to put a Yoke of Bondage upon the Necks of *Israel*. Some Rats and Mice in the House, some Locusts and Caterpillars in the Field, and a few Wolves and Foxes in the Woods and Forests, are wisely appointed by Providence to exercise Man's Patience, and to stir him up to Care and Vigilance; but when they are exceedingly numerous, when they fill all places, and cannot be driven or frayed away, then it is certain that God intends to destroy the Land entirely, he has purposed to plague the Land, and to take away all the Beauty and Glory of it: even so God has condemned that Nation or People to his severest Judgments; his Wrath is kindled against them, and will burn till it has consumed them, where
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the Serpentine Brood of Error is multiplied, where False Prophets are numerous and successful, and where damnable and false Doctrines are generally and universally: *Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; therefore God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient: Also, Because they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved. Even, for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lye, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

I have now gone through the chiefest Objections which I either did hear, or apprehended would be made against Providence: I hope the Answers I have given shall be acknowledged clear and satisfying, and they may serve also to clear other Difficulties which have not been particularly mentioned.

17. And now when all has been examined which can be said against Providence, how evident doth it appear? The strongest and most studied Objection is so far from renversing a Providence, or from shaking the Belief of it, that it rather confirms them. How unreasonable are Men's Prejudices against this most important Truth? What they cavil at, are Instances of the greatest Wisdom, Power and Goodness. These Absurdities which they condemn in Providence, are wise Contrivances to persuade us of the Divine Presence, to guide our Reason beyond our Senses, and to carry our Thoughts and Care further than the present Life.

There can be no Excuse for the Disbelief of a Providence, for there is no want of Evidence; and if it doth not effectually convince, it is because Men do not seriously consider. The Sun may shine bright enough; but Men may shut their Eyes upon its Light, and then whose fault is it that they cannot see! The Inconsistencies which they object, are but so many Instances of their

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own Ignorance and Pride, which are the two great Supports of Atheism and Deism, and which always, when joined together, carry to great Insolency: *But Wisdom is justified by her children.*

18. But though I have fully shewed how the Mouths of all the Enemies of God and Providence may be stop't, yet I am far from pretending that all the Difficulties of Providence may be resolv'd, or all its Mysteries explained: This is a Work above the reach of either Angels or Men, and it is the highest Insolency to attempt it. For,

1st. *Providence*, like the Essence, Nature, and all the Attributes of God, is Infinite, and consequently Incomprehensible by Understandings that are finite. As a Man understandeth more than a Child; so the more perfect any one is, he is the more capable of greatest Degrees of Knowledge: but the most perfect created Being is not capable to grasp an Infinite. We may with as much modesty pretend that our Sight is capable of being co-extended with the Universe, that our Eyes may see beyond the Clouds, that they may penetrate into the Heart of the Earth, and into the Depth of the Sea, and all this at once, as that our Minds may reach and comprehend all the Acts and Transactions of Providence. A Child of two or three Years old is fitter to judge of the Ways and Actions of a wise, cunning Man; and a meer Countrey Clown, who never knew any thing except to draw Fodder for the Oxen, is better qualified to explain the Mysteries of State and Government, than the Wisest Man upon Earth to find out all the Works of God, which are infinitely above our Capacity: *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: He doth things past finding out, yea, and wonders without number; he doth great things which we cannot comprehend.* But,

2^{dly}. God purposely hideth many of his Ways and Works both from Angels and Men; and then how is it possible to discover them? When he cloatheth himself
with

204 *Mens Prejudices against Providence consider'd,*
with Light, we cannot behold his Splendour : and when he covereth himself with Darknes, how can we see him ? When he shutteth up his Counsel, who can declare it ? *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive him : on the left-hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him ; he hideth himself on the right-hand, that I cannot see him. It is the glory of God (saith Solomon) to conceal a thing.* And what he hath purposed should be a Secret, will never take air : For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God : For who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord ? or, being his counsellor, hath taught him ? with whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding ? Some things God hath made plain ; other things he makes intelligible to a modest and humble Enquirer : but there be some things which he reserves to himself, which cannot be communicated, and which to enquire after is the highest Presumption : *Secret things belong unto God : Revealed things, to us and our children.* The Mysteries of the Gospel were kept hid from the beginning of the World, and some things are still kept secret : *Of that day and of that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven.* When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth ; then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun ; because, though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it ; yea, further, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able find it, Eccles. 8. 16.

3dly. Many Acts of Providence are difficult, yea, unintelligible ; because they are strangely interwoven together, and because they have a relation to something which doth not yet appear. Something done some hundred years ago, might be the cause and occasion of what is done now ; and some of the present Transactions may be designed with a prospect to something that is
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not to fall out some hundred years hence. What is a doing here, may be in order to some Design in some other very distant part of the World. And what is connected together, must be explained together ; one part cannot be explained without another, nor any part fully understood without the whole Contrivance. One of common Sense, nay, a very Child, may at the first perceive any Wheel, or any part of a Watch, to be the work of Art ; but the Mechanism of that Wheel or Part, the Reasons of its Quantity, Figure, Motion, and other Particularities, cannot be demonstrated, without considering all the other Parts and Wheels, their Motion, and the general Contrivance of the Watch it self. So, take any part of the best shap'd Statue which the most skilful Artist ever wrought ; I say, take this by it self, and it is impossible to make one sensible of the just and exact proportion of it : This can only be done, by comparing it with the rest, and by shewing the Use and Design of it, and the Place where it was to be set up. So we are told of two Statuaries, who were appointed by the City where they lived, to shew their Skill upon the Image of the God or Goddes which was worshipped there ; each of them produced his Piece when finished, one of them seem'd very beautiful and curious, and the other look'd so rough and ill-favour'd, that the Spectators condemn'd the Author, as designing to affront their Deity : But he, to justify himself, desired to know where they were to place them : Which being shewed, he set them both up there, and then they had contrary appearances ; for what before seem'd beautiful, shewed no Art at all ; and what was judg'd coarse and deformed, was found so well proportion'd, that nothing could be more handsom or pleasing to the Eye. Many things must be consider'd, before we can judge rightly of some one thing. And because it is impossible for any Man to know all things, to have a comprehensive knowledge of things past, present, and to come ; therefore no Man, at least in this World, can know or understand all the

Acts

Acts of Divine Providence, nor is any Man able to unriddle them. And from this we may see whence proceeds Men's Mistakes, and unreasonable Prejudices against Providence, even from a partial Consideration of it: They view separately what should be considered in conjunction with other things, and do not reflect seriously upon all Circumstances. The best Tapestry that ever came from the *Goblins*, will neither shew Art nor Beauty, if it be torn to pieces, or if the back-side be only looked upon: *God hath made every thing beautiful in its time; also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work which God maketh from the beginning to the end. In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.* If we could see the Beginning and End of Things, if we could discern all their Relations, we should then perceive those *Acts* of Providence which now offend us, to be worthy of the highest Admiration and Praise.

For these Reasons, upon the account of the Infinity of the Subject, the designed Secrecy, and the Intricacy of the Chain of Things, because of their wonderful intermixture, and the strange connexion betwixt things at remote distances both of time and place, upon one or other of these accounts, we cannot hope to understand perfectly and clearly all the Acts of Divine Providence: But many things relating both to Private Persons, and Publick States, to the Heathen and Christian World, must be entertained with a silent Admiration: *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Who is sufficient for these things? Who dare dive into these Depths, and offer to fetch from thence the Secrets which God has sealed up? What Understanding can penetrate into the Counsel of God? and what is that Worm Man, that he should presume to Judge the Actions of the Most High, and take upon him either to find fault with, or to rectifie them! Should Weak-*

Weakness dictate to Omnipotence? Can Ignorance advise Infinite Wisdom? Is he who is but of Yesterday, without Knowledge and Experience, is he fit to direct Him *whose years cannot be numbred*? Oh, what Immodesty! what Pride, Arrogance, and unsufferable Insolency is it, for Man to Censure the Acts of Providence, which are as far above his Capacity, as Heaven is above Earth! *Gird up thy loins now like a man, I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? The thoughts of mortal men are but miserable, and our devices are but uncertain: hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us; but the things that are in heaven, who hath searched out?*

ESSAY VI.

*A general View of Faith in God and Providence;
how necessary to the being Just and Righteous,
and what it is to live by it.*

1. **F***aith in God*, is a firm Belief and thorough Persuasion of the Existence of One most Perfect Being, who has all Power, all Wisdom, and all Goodness; who is Just, Holy, Supreme over all, and Independent on any; who is Eternal, that is, who never had a Beginning, neither shall ever have an End; who always was what he is, neither is liable to decay; who is Infinite, that is, his Nature, Essence, Attributes and Perfections, do not only exceed our comprehension, and cannot be bounded by us, but also, that they are in themselves illimitable, and impossible to be exceeded:
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for Infinite is more than Indefinite, and doth imply, not an unknown or undetermined Perfection, but the highest and most superlative Plenitude of Perfection, beyond which there neither are nor can be any degrees: finally, that this Being, is the Author and true Cause of all other things which are or have been, and nothing can be without him. The *Idea* of God comprehends all this; and Faith in God, is (as I have said) a Belief and Persuasion that there is a Being to whom this Idea agrees, and of whom this is a true Description.

2. *Faith in Providence*, is a full Conviction, that God, or this Being now described, is present every where, knows every thing, and foresees all that shall be; that he preserves all things in being, appointeth the time of their existence, and assigneth to every thing a proper place; that he superintendeth all Natural and Inanimate Things, and all Creatures brutish and void of understanding, and directeth their Motions, determines their Operations and Influences, and suspends them at his pleasure; that he beholdeth, as Judge and Governor, all Intelligent Beings, that he knoweth their inward Sentiments, Inclinations, Resolutions, and that though they be free, yet he both foreseeeth what they will do, and also manageth both their Inclinations and Actions so as to serve the wise Purposes of his Counsel; that he directeth to all the Good, and permitteth all the Evil which they do, and is the Author of all the Happiness and Misery, of all the Blessings and Afflictions which befall either private Persons, or Nations and Kingdoms; that he loveth and rewardeth good and vertuous Persons, and punisheth wicked ones: In a word, that there is no such thing as *Chance*, but that God ordaineth the most minute thing which falleth out, that he hath all in Heaven and Earth at his disposal, that he doth in both what he pleases, and maketh all Creatures and all their Actions serve his Ends, which, whether they be known or secret, cannot but be VVise, and

and Just, and Good, and Holy ; that is, every way worthy of God, who knoweth certainly what is best, and is not, neither can be, under any necessity of doing any thing contrary to his Nature, or unbecoming his Majesty.

3. Nothing is either more certain or more evident, than *Faith in God*, and in such a *Providence* as is just now declared ; I mean, there is all reason to receive Both ; and that Both are clear, necessary and certain Consequences and Deductions from what any of common Sense and Judgment may observe, if he will but open his eyes, and be at the pains to consider what is before him, and what surrounds him on every side. Every thing we see, every thing we hear, every thing we feel, doth call upon us to believe in God and a Providence, and we walk daily in the midst of Evidences of Both. The Existence of *God* is demonstrable all the ways by which any thing is or can be demonstrated : There is no Repugnancy or Contradiction in the Nature of the Thing ; if it be denied, many Contradictions and senseless Absurdities must be granted ; and it is declared by the Frame of our Bodies and the Nature of our Souls, by our Outward Senses and Internal Faculties, by every part of the World considered separately, and by the composition of all together ; for all and every one of these are and must be the Effects of an Almighty Wisdom, or an Omniscient Power and Goodness, that is, of God, as was particularly shewed in the *First Part* of our *Enquiry*.

And that there is both an Universal and Particular Providence, that God hath not withdrawn himself, but is still present to preserve the World, to rule it, and to govern and manage all things aright, is most evident from the Nature of God himself, and from the Nature of all Creatures, as well as the Constitution and Harmony of the World, which could not subsist without the particular Concurrence and Superintendency of God, the Wise and Almighty Author of them. This further ap-

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pears to a Demonstration, from the Arbitrary Effects in the Material World, whether common and ordinary, as the Determination of Winds, Rain, the Alterations of the Weather, and such like, or extraordinary and unusual, as Prodigies, Signs and Apparitions in the Air, and other strange and preternatural Things which rarely fall out, and which can only be ascribed to the Arbitrary Will of a Supreme Being. This is demonstrable by manifold Instances in the Intellectual World, by the wise adaptation of this World to Man's Nature and Capacity, and the making Labour and Industry necessary to the obtaining the Necessaries and Comforts of Life; by giving and continuing to Man an Authority over all other Animals, without which, neither he could have been secure, nor they serviceable; by proportioning the number of both Sexes, without which, Mankind had failed, and our Condition had been very inconvenient; by adjusting Deaths and Births, so that neither the Race of Mankind wears out by the one, nor is the World overstock'd or too hastily peopled by the other; by giving to each Sex, and to every individual Person, particular and peculiar Marks of Distinction, without which, great Disorders and Confusion would follow; by the wonderful diversity of Genius's, the strange variety of Spirits and Dispositions, which are arbitrarily diffused both as to Time and Place, and without which, the various and different Employments, so necessary to the common Good of the World, could neither be undertaken nor perform'd; by sending now and then a projecting Genius, a Spirit set upon Designs to oblige others to exert their Capacities; by suggesting useful Inventions, at unexpected Times, by improper Persons; by keeping up the due Value of Money, which is the Life and Sinews of Trade and Commerce; by establishing Government, without which there could have been no Peace, and for that end, instituting Marriage, and keeping up the use of it, contrary to Men's private Inclinations; by incorporating Mankind into distinct Nations and Kingdoms,
and

and securing that necessary Division, by the Confusion of Languages, and the Inspiring the generality with a particular Affection to their own Nation and People ; by fenceing the Authority of Kings and Rulers from the rude and insolent Attempts of the People , without which, Government could not subsist, but fall to the ground ; by detecting of secret Crimes , without which, Humane Laws were ineffectual, and meer Cobwebs for securing Justice or Property, or preserving our Life from the Designs of Malice and Revenge : Providence is demonstrable by these and a thousand Instances more, which would fill Volumes, if they were particularly enlarged on.

It is moreover Confirmed by the Accusations of its Adversaries, and by all that studied Wit and Spite can object against it : For it is evident, that an Universal and Particular Providence is neither above the Capacity of God, nor inconsistent with his Happiness, nor unbecoming his Dignity, nor destructive of Humane Liberty. It is evident, that the World is not governed by Humane Prudence ; that what is called *Chance*, is the Contrivance of Divine Wisdom ; that the unequal Distribution of Wealth, the many Miseries of Mankind, the permission of Sin, the Afflictions of the Just, and the Prosperity of the Wicked, the procedure of Publick Calamities, the removal of wise Kings, the setting up foolish ones and Tyrants, the appointing unjust Judges, the concealing Events, and the Methods of Proceeding with the Church ; I say, it is evident, that all these are wisely contrived, and admirably designed by God, for excellent Ends and Purposes, for setting forth the Glory of his Name, the Manifestation of his wonderful Nature and Attributes, and for the greater Good and Advantage to Mankind : To prove all which, has been the Design of *This Second Part* ; and I hope the Performance doth answer the Design, and will satisfie.

4. Many more things might be added, but more reasonable Satisfaction cannot be demanded ; he who is not convinced by these, is resolved to be obstinate, and not to be convinced by any Testimonies. In the judgment of all Mankind, Two or Three unexceptionable Witnesses have been thought sufficient to confirm a thing ; nay, where positive Proofs have been wanting, the concurrence of some strong Presumptions has reasonably determined the Cause which was enquired into. Now, there are both certain Demonstrations for the Existence of God and Providence, and also abundance of *Cumulative Proofs*, which though singly they do not demonstrate, yet taken together, they amount to a Demonstration, and ought to be received as a certain undoubted Evidence. There is none who doubts the Truth and Certainty of a God and Providence, but who at the same time is tenacious of Opinions, which have not the thousandth part of the Evidence of these : wherefore nothing can be more unreasonable, or more unjust, than the disbelief of these important Things. He who doth not own Them, neither is inwardly persuaded of Them, must be either strangely blockish and stupid, or most perversely wicked ; either he cannot, and is altogether incapable of using his Reason, and so has no more right to *Humane Nature*, but what his outward shape gives him, which is the least and most inconsiderable Property of a Man ; or he has abandoned his Reason, and given himself over to a Reprobate Mind, that he may say and do what contradicts the common Sense and Interest of Mankind : This Man resists the Truth, because he hates it ; he is not convinced, because he hath wilfully shut his Eyes, and stopt his Ears, and hardened his Heart, and seared both his Outward Senses and Inward Faculties, that nothing may affect them, or leave an impression upon them ; which is the very Root and Principle of Wickedness, and which disposeth one to the most barbarous and most wicked Act to which there can be either occasion or temptation. Nothing is strong enough
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to tie him who has shaken himself loose from the Obligations of a God and Providence. *Atheists, in the end of the Consequence, shall become Canibals,* (saith the Author of the late *Letter to the Deists*, which was written out of tenderness to the honour of that very Venerable and New-fashionable Society, who claim the Monopoly of Reason, but whose Reputation that Author was afraid of, if they entertained such as denied a Providence, so necessary both to the inward Peace of one's Mind, and to the outward Security and Happiness of the World ;) *Methinks,* saith he, *I should need few words to persuade you, Gentlemen (who are Deists indeed) to renounce the fraternity of those who (lurking under the cover of that Name) go about secretly undermining the Welfare of all Mankind. Whatever Humanity may be shewn to their Persons, there is no Indulgence due to their Opinions. To smile at, and take complacence in the bold strokes which, in daily conversation, they give at the Root of all Religion, is to be delighted with the Ruine of all Humane Society. Let us therefore be always upon our guard, and in all occasions discountenance and oppose their pernicious Principles : The Task of opposing them is not difficult.* The disbelief of a God and Providence, makes one a Rebel to Heaven, a Monster in the Intellectual World, an Affront to Truth, Reason and Conviction, a Scandal to Humane Nature, and an obstinate Enemy to Mankind : In a word, This is the height of Perverseness and Absurdity, and the utmost degree of Wickedness and Injustice.

5. But as it thus appears, that the Denial of a God and Providence, is most unreasonable and unjust, and both a Declaration of a wicked Temper, and a Preparation to all Evil ; so, on the contrary, *Faith in them,* is an Indication of a Sound Mind, and a Disposition to True Righteousness. This Faith shews that one's Nature is not wholly depraved, nor his Faculties perverted ; that he has the use of his Reason, and is capable of Conviction : This both testifies, that the Inward Constitution is at present right, and also giveth hopes of further

growth unto Perfection. Whether Righteousness be considered with a respect to Right Reason in general, or in relation to God, this Faith is absolutely necessary: For if Right Reason be the Standard, he cannot be reasonably reckoned Just or Righteous, who opposeth obvious Truths, and who rejecteth the first and plain Principles of Reason; this Man's Morality is not founded upon Reason, but has some Sandy Foundation, which may be easily swept away: for he who doth slight These, may be brought to pass over all other Things. But True Righteousness is to be considered always with a regard to God, (as 'twas hinted, *Essay 2^d. of the First Part*;) it is no other than a Conformity to his Will, and an Acknowledgment of his Nature and Attributes; which can never be, without Faith in his Existence and Providence.

Righteousness is as Loyalty, which doth not consist wholly in External Acts of Compliance; for these may be payed by them who have both a Disposition, and also firm Resolutions to revolt: but true Loyalty lies chiefly in the Belief and Persuasion of the King's Right and Authority, of which Outward Obedience is the proper Expression, and necessary Consequence; for where Tribute, Honour and Subjection are refused, or murmured at, there and then the Authority which requires it is question'd, that is, disbelieved or forgotten: Even so every Sin and evil Act shews a defect in or a deviation from Faith in God and Providence, and proceeds from a disbelief of them, or the not considering them aright: For that is not Evil; it is no Sin which is consistent with a true and firm Faith in God, his Nature, Attributes and Providence. Wherefore, this Faith is both the Foundation of true Righteousness, and the Security of it: It unites us to the most Righteous God, as Loyalty doth Subjects to their King; but Unbelief separates from God, and draweth upon one the guilt of Rebellion and Wickedness: *Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

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6. And thus it appears how Faith in God and Providence is necessary to Righteousness. Men are wicked, because they do not believe a God or a Providence: *The transgression of the wicked saith that there is no fear of God before his eyes : he hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten, he hideth his face, he will never see it.* But the *Just do live by Faith*; and who doth live by this Faith, is Just and Righteous; as he is a Loyal Subject, who, on all occasions, regardeth the King's Authority, and expresseth his sense and persuasion of his Right and Fitness to Govern. The Loyalty of Persons is not to be measured by their Usefulness, or the Nature and Consequence of their Acts, but by their adherence to the King's Title and Authority; so our Righteousness is to be measured by the Strength, and Firmness, and Constancy of our Faith in God and his Providence. The more perfect our Faith, the more perfect we our selves are, not only as to Holiness and Righteousness strictly so called, but as to all other Excellencies which our Nature is capable of: for Faith acquaints us with God, and makes us observant of those Manifestations he has been pleased to give of his Wisdom, Power, Goodness, and other Attributes, which both enricheth the Mind with the most desirable Knowledge, and also gives us a resemblance unto him: For when *we with open face, behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.* Imitation follows Observation, and both, in process of time, beget a Conformity; and how can he be other than a perfect and good Man, who is like unto God, who bears his Image, and whose Sentiments and Actions are agreeable and corresponding to the Nature of God himself, and to the Acts and Ends of his Providence.

7. By the Exercise then of Faith, we become Perfect and Righteous, and can be neither without it. I say, by the *Exercise*; and it must be a *continued* Exercise too: for single and desultory Acts of Faith, do not render us

Righteous and Just, more than lucid Intervals are sufficient to denominate one Wise, who at other times is Mad and Extravagant. He who never shews Faith in God or his Providence, who lives as if there were none, is spiritually dead, dead to God, and to all the Intents and Purposes of Righteousness which can only recommend us to his Love and Favour, even as much as that Body is naturally dead, which neither breaths, nor moves, nor gives any sign of life. And he who sends forth flashes of Faith only now and then, whose Faith only appears by sudden fits, by motions at some certain times and occasions, is like one in a Lethargy or Apoplexy, or some such Distemper, where the Vital Faculties are so sadly oppress'd, that the Person cannot be said to be either dead or alive; not so dead, as is fit to be buried; and yet so under the power of Death, as not to be reckoned amongst the Living, there being only some small hopes, and a bare possibility of a return to Life. *The Just do live by Faith*; and none are Just, but they who do so, that is, none are perfectly, truly or sincerely Righteous, but such as live the Life of Faith, all whose Motions and Actions are from Faith, and who do express Faith as often as there is occasion. Faith to the Just, is as Life and Sense to an Animal, which is an Active Principle that continually accompanies it, spreads through all its parts, and that exerts it self suitably to the Objects which surround it or influence it: And as we conclude, a defect in this Principle of Life and Sense, or some suspension of it, when the Animal, or any Member of it, does not move, act, or appear sensible upon the approach of Objects which are capable to influence it; so that Man's Faith is not sound, nor is he to be esteemed perfectly and thoroughly Righteous, who doth not shew Faith when he ought to do it, and who at some times, and on some occasions, acts and behaves himself without any regard to God, and his Wise and Universal Providence. Hence we may see the impertinency of that Debate, *Whether a Man be Justified by Faith or Works?* and the ignorance of those

those who have contended for either side of the Question, to the prejudice and mis-guidance of many. Subtle Heads may as wisely dispute, whether a Man is to be accounted Wise and Reasonable by his Faculties, or his Actions; which one without Learning may justly decide, by neither singly, but by both together. He is neither Wise, nor Reasonable, nor Vertuous, who lets his Faculties sleep, who loiters away his Time, and who doth not behave himself as the Time and Occasion require, and suitably to his own and others Circumstances: Nor is either the Wisdom or Vertue of that Man to be admired, who stumbles upon commendable Actions by chance, without design or consideration: He only is a Wise and Reasonable Man, who considereth what he doth, who acts upon Principles of Reason, and who, from these Principles, doth what is just, right, and proper to be done. *We are justified by Faith; but Faith worketh by Works, and by Works is Faith made perfect.* We cannot obtain the Divine Approbation, unless our Faith be fruitful, and our Works proceed from Faith; though neither Faith nor Works singly or apart, nor yet together, merit otherwise at the Hand God, than upon the account of his own Goodness, Mercy, and Free Promise: For *He who chargeth the Angels with Folly*, what Imperfections may he find in the best Man upon Earth?

8. The Accurateness and Propriety of Scripture Expressions are very observable, for they are very Exact, and admirably adapted to Truth, and the Nature of Things; which proves the Authors to be more than ordinary Men, and that they had a more sublime and comprehensive Knowledge than what either Education, or the use of their own Reason could give them: for the Idea's of the wisest Heathens come short of theirs, nor are their Expressions so full and emphatick.

It is most wisely said, that *the Just do live by Faith*; for Faith and Righteousness are as universal as Life, and equally extended with it. They are very much mistaken, who

who confine Religion, or the Worship of God, to certain Times and Places, and who limit it to some few particular Acts. They do not well understand Faith, who think it is only to be exercised in the Temple, or when the Scriptures are read; for we ought to shew Faith, where-ever the Objects of Faith, *viz.* God and his Providence, are discernible, and that is every where: In every place God manifests himself one way or other; he speaks to us always either by his Power, or his Wisdom, or his Mercy, or his Justice; he is always before us, either as a Preserver or Benefactor, as a Sovereign Lord, or as a Supreme Judge, as a Father and Friend frowning or smiling, he is continually working about us either plain things which we may understand, or mysterious things above our reach. And a Just Man considereth all this, and doth accordingly: He that believes, has his Eyes always upon the Lord; he observeth all his Motions; he listeneth to all the Calls of his Providence; he maketh suitable Returns, and regulateth his Behaviour according to the Nature and Circumstances of those different Appearances of God, which are only discernible by the Eyes of Faith. He that believes, sees God every where, and in every thing; and it is this Sight which guides his Thoughts, and directs his Actions whether Natural or Civil.

This is the *Obedience of Faith*, which is true Righteousness; for he who thus follows Faith, not only shews a Desire and Willingness to be Just; not only takes the best and proper Method, but also he actually studies a Conformity to the only True and Perfect Standard, even God himself. There is no Justice, neither can be, where God is not duly acknowledged; for He being First and Chief, therefore a Regard ought to be paid to Him before all, and above all, otherwise there is no Justice done to him, nor indeed to any other; for his Will and Pleasure is the Supreme Law which must regulate all other Rules; it is by this, that their Exactness and Equity must be measured: so that to be truly Just, is
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to do the *perfect Will of God*, and to seek out what is pleasing to him ; it is, to order our Life and Conversation so, as that they may answer the Rules and Ends of his Providence, which is the highest Wisdom, and Goodness, and Justice, and Equity. Hence it is that our Righteousness encreaseth according to the measure and degrees of our Faith, and that Faith extends to the whole Life of Man. Faith sanctifies both the Natural and Civil Life, by consecrating both to God and his Service. They are Just, who live by Faith, because they live unto God. The whole Life of Perfect and Upright Men, is a Life of Faith : *The life that they now live in the flesh, is by Faith* in God and his Providence, upon which account they are held as Righteous.

9. It cannot be expected that I should here describe the whole Life of Faith, or all that Righteousness of Faith which Just and Good Men, and they who believe a God and Providence, ought to aim at : I say, *aim at* ; for they must not be excluded who sincerely aim at this, though they have not arrived at the highest Perfection. There are Degrees and different Measures in this Spiritual Life, as well as the Natural : All Men have not the same Stature, nor Strength, nor Vigour, nor Activity : Every Man doth not come up to *the fulness of the stature of a perfect man* ; and yet they who fall short, are justly reckoned Men.

My Design is not to give a perfect System of Morality, but only to shew the true Foundation of it ; which being once sincerely laid, any Man of Reason may know how or what to build upon it, and whether what is built be agreeable. When once a Man is fully persuaded that there is a God and a Providence, and is instructed in the Nature of them, (as has been described and illustrated,) if he allow himself to think, and be capable to draw Consequences, he may soon perceive what he is obliged to ; and this is certain, that he will find the Superstructure which the Scripture raiseth,
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exact and well-proportion'd to the Foundation, and all that it requires, as clearly reasonable as any thing in the Mathematicks. Therefore we are told, that when God desired *Abraham* to study to be a Perfect, Good Man, he gave him but this one Rule, as comprehensive of all others, *viz.* That he would continually remember and consider God and his Providence; *Walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

But however, I will give some few Instances, which, as they are necessary Consequences of Faith in God and Providence, so they are of general Use and Influence to the whole Life, and to the right framing of both the Inward and Outward Man.

10. And first in reference to God himself: Faith in him, obligeth us,

First, To have Him in the highest Esteem and Admiration; because He is far above all that we can conceive, and infinitely Perfect in his Nature. He neither can be liable to any Imperfection, nor can he want any Perfection or Excellence, and He is the Source or Foundation whence all the Perfections and Excellencies of other things do flow. He therefore is to be esteemed and admired above all things; nay, He only ought to be esteemed, neither ought any thing besides God to be praised and magnified; at least, where-ever we meet with any thing Good, Excellent, or Praise-worthy, we ought not to stop there, but should immediately raise our Thoughts to God, who is the Author and Giver of All. The Beauty, Perfection, Vertue and Benefit of all Beings in Heaven or Earth are his: Take from the Best what it hath of God, and what remains will not be worth the considering: He contrived the Objects which please the Eye, and which delight the Ear, and which gratifie the Taste, and which affect either the Outward or Inward Senses; and 'twas He who gave us these Faculties which render us capable of perceiving them, and susceptible of the Pleasure and Satisfaction which they yield.

yield. Wherefore both Outward Objects and our Sensation of them, whatever valuable thing we meet with, whatever affords Pleasure to the Body, or Contentment to the Mind, should be used as so many occasions to admire, and praise and magnifie the Power, and Wisdom and Goodness of God, who has purposely contrived all these things, that he may express and shew forth his own Perfections. As when we behold the Art and Beauty, the State and Magnificence of some Palace, its rich Furniture, and costly Ornaments, we, upon every view, and upon every instance, turn our Thoughts to the Prince or King to whom it belongs, and take occasion to praise and admire his Greatness, Power and Glory. To stop at the Contemplation of Created Excellencies, and not to proceed to the Praise and Admiration of Him who created them, is Idolatry; it is a robbing of God, and giving his Glory unto another; it is like the brutishness of a hungry Man, who sitteth down to a plentiful Table, and satisfieth his Appetite, without a civil remembrance of him whose Bounty provided the Meat: *If Men be delighted with the beauty of things, let them know how much better the Lord of them is; for the first Author of Beauty created them: If they be astonished at their Power and Vertue, let them understand by them how much mightier he is that made them.* Heaven and Earth, and every thing in Nature, represents God infinitely Great, worthy of our highest Esteem, and of all the Honour we are capable to express: And when we have raised our Thoughts to the highest pitch, and exerted our utmost Power to magnifie him, we should even then acknowledge that we are much short of what he deserves. *When you glorifie the Lord (saith the Son of Sirach) exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed: and when you exalt him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary, for you can never go far enough.*

Wherefore we ought not only to put away all evil Thoughts of God, but we should never entertain those that are mean and low: we should not, as the Heathens did,

did, charge him with Humane Passions and Infirmities ; far less with Levities, which wise and good Men will not be guilty of : For what is unworthy of Men, is much more unbecoming the Majesty and Greatness of him who is infinitely Perfect. We should not make bold with his Name, nor mock his Nature or Attributes, nor break Jest upon any thing he doth or hath done ; for this is inconsistent with that high Esteem which is due to him, and it tendeth to lower him both in our own and in the apprehensions of others, which is very provoking. We should avoid and abhor all corporeal Representations of God ; for the most glorious Image and Figure which can be made, has no more resemblance than an Oyster-shell to the Soul of Man, and is greater indignity than to draw a King with a Tail, or to Crown a Monkey, and to set it up for the Picture of Majesty : whence it is that this is so severely forbidden in Scripture, and that the People who were guilty of it, were so often plagued with great and sore Judgments. When we speak of God, it should be with most profound Reverence ; and all our Addresses should be performed in such a manner as may best express our own sense of his Incomprehensible Dignity and Perfection, and which may be most apt to beget a due Esteem of it in others ; that is, they should be most Grave, and accompanied with all signs of Humility and Distance. When we come before God, especially in the solemn Assemblies, we should *not be rash or hasty to speak* : clownish Words, coarse, nasty and unsavoury Phrases, and also all rhetorical flourishes of Wit and Eloquence, are carefully to be avoided ; for the first are rude and blunt, the other are light, frothy and immodest, both of them are fulsom, and neither of them decent, either becoming our Distance, or suitable to God's Dignity. Neither is a multitude of any Words proper, because it is an assuming too much freedom and familiarity. *Let thy words (saith Solomon) be few* ; and they ought to be grave, august, and full of sense : So our outward Actions and Gesture ought

ought to be such as either common Reason, or the Custom of the Place, have agreed to be proper Signs of great Humility and Reverence. They who discard these as Superstitious, are grossly ignorant, and without consideration ; for what is reasonable, decent, most agreeable, yea, necessary, cannot be reckoned Acts of Superstition, which is a bigotry and fondness for things above what their nature and use require.

Is it not most reasonable to pay Reverence where it is due ? and, Can it be accounted Superstition, to shew Humility and Distance where the highest Acts of Reverence, and the greatest Humiliation come not nigh what is deserved ? Doth not the weakness of our Nature require, that our Inward Esteem be raised, cherished and secured by the solemnity of Outward Acts ? If Kings were not distinguished by their Purple and Diadems ; if they were not dignified by Guards, a solemn Attendance, and Ceremonies of great Respect, their Authority could not be supported, the dread of them would fall, and People would become too bold with their Persons. Outward Acts of Honour and Respect are yet more necessary to keep up a due sense of an Invisible Being. Nor is this wholly founded upon the Weakness of our Nature, but upon the Reason of the thing ; for the very Angels and highest Seraphims do observe this Method in their Approaches to the Throne of God, if we receive what the Scripture says of them.

Secondly, We are obliged to love God with all our soul, with all our heart, and with our whole mind ; that is, as much as our Natures are capable of. Our Love to God should be most ardent, and still encreasing ; for while it is short of Infinite, it cannot be more than enough. We may exceed in our Love of other things ; but not in our Love to God, if we remember either what he is, or what he has done for us : He is infinitely Excellent, and he possesseth all that may draw our Affections after him ; and Many are his wonderful works which he hath done, and his thoughts to us-ward ; they cannot be reckoned up in order :

if we should declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbred. He therefore should be the chief Delight of our Souls; all our Inclinations should run after him, and he should inhanche all our Affections: yet this is not to be so understood, as if we should study an Insensibility of other things, and to be perfectly unconcerned about them. He who affects this is Mad, for it is neither desirable nor possible: Not possible, because God has made us capable of Impressions from Outward Objects; and it is impossible to be so abstracted, as either not to feel pain when we are hurt, or not to have complacency when we enjoy what is agreeable: Neither is it desirable; for God hath made the Influences of the Creatures both necessary and useful, and it is by them that he imparteth to our minds a sense and perception of his own Excellencies. God is a Pure, Invisible Spirit, whom we can neither see, taste nor feel immediately, but only by the means of the Creatures which he hath made, and the Works which he doth: Therefore to censure all Desire after other things, and all manner of Complacency in them, is really to blame the infinite Wisdom of God, and to quarrel at his wise Methods and Contrivances.

Metaphysical Descriptions and Distinctions of Love, are more nice than useful; they only perplex and render intricate, what is very plain and intelligible. As every one knows what Seeing and Hearing are, so likewise what Love is, though very few are capable to explain the Operations of either one or the other. Every body feels that Love is a desire after and a delight in what is good, worthy, necessary, useful and agreeable; that these Qualities beget Love, and that it encreaseth according to our sense and apprehensions of them. If one doth not love an Object that is amiable, and worthy of love, it is because he doth not know or consider it; and if one doth not love a thing so much as it ought to be loved, it is because he doth not understand all its Excellencies.

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Without Faith, God is neither known nor understood ; therefore they who do not believe, suffer their Affections to run out altogether upon the Creatures whose Influences they find agreeable, because they know no better Object. But Faith sets before us a more Amiable and Desirable Being than any which falls under our sense ; a Being which excels all others, more than the Light of the Sun doth the faint Appearance of a Glow-worm : it shews, that the Perfections of all other Things are only borrowed from Him ; that all their Excellencies, and amiable Qualities, are but Rays and Beams that flow from the Infinite Plenitude of his Essence : And therefore the Souls of them who believe, cleave to God above all things ; they neither prefer any thing to him, nor will they suffer any thing to rival it with him, because they are convinced that he is better than all things, that He alone is able to satisfy the Mind, and that without Him nothing is available. They who live by Faith, check all inordinate Affection ; their Love is reasonable ; their Love to other things is kept within measure, but their Love to God has neither measure nor degrees ; it is an irresistible flame which cannot be quenched, and which overcometh all Obstacles and Difficulties. Faith doth not render one insensible of the Goodness and Excellency of the Creatures, but it so far disengageth the Affections, as to make a Separation easy. nay, sometimes, very acceptable, viz. when it is a Proof of Love to God.

As Faith enflameth the Soul with a strong and vehement Passion for God ; so this Passion maketh one regard all the Creatures, as a Woman doth the *Presents* received from one who loves her, and whom she loves sincerely, which she values more for his sake than their own ; she is sensible of their intrinsic worth, but she accounts them more valuable, because they came from him ; she useth them, and decketh her self with them, because it rendreth her more gracious and acceptable in the Eyes of her Beloved ; and also, to please him, or to serve his Interest, she can, without any grudge, resign and give

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them away. 'And as this Humane Love, where it is great and sincere, maketh one easie, and satisfied with the Conversation of the Person beloved, though there be a separation from other Relations, and other Circumstances not very agreeable ; so that Love which is kindled by Faith, doth and should give us all Satisfaction and Delight, even while there is a loss and deprivation of all other things. *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the Olive shall fail, the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and I will joy in the God of my salvation.* This is the height of Divine Love, whither we should all aim , and to which, Faith in God, and his Infinite Perfections, and the sense of his great Kindness, do indispensibly oblige us.

Thirdly, It follows, That the great Business of our Life should be, to know God, and to acquaint our selves with him. This is highly worthy of our Thoughts, Pains and Time, being most Noble and Excellent in it self, and of infinite Use and Advantage to us. The meanest Employment in this World, may become worthy of one of the Highest Rank, if it be undertaken at the Command of God, in obedience to his Will and Pleasure, with respect to his wise Institution, and with a design to glorifie Him, and to serve the Ends of his Providence : But without the Consideration of these things, the best and most honourable Calling is below the Dignity of Man ; it is inferior to the Capacity of his Soul. He whose Thoughts are entirely taken up with Earthly Things, who bestows all his Time, Labour and Study upon the common Affairs of this World, which even otherwise are innocent, lawful, and necessary, he forgets the Quality of his Nature, he layeth aside his Dignity, and yieldeth himself to a very mean Drudgery and Slavery. He who minds nothing but Eating and Drinking, and the satisfying his sensual Appetite, debaseth himself into a Brute ; and they are not much distinguish'd
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from the inferior Animals, whose Reasons and Understandings are only exercis'd about the Contrivance and Purchasing, the Ordering and Managing the Conveniences and Advantages of our present outward state; for Art and Industry, Labour and Diligence, Sagacity and Fore-sight, Method and Order, are discernible amongst the Beasts in a very high degree. The Knowledge of God can only make an essential difference betwixt us and other Animals: This is above their Capacity; it sets them at a vast distance from us, and it raiseth us to a State and Dignity answerable to the largeness of our Desires. Food is not more craved by the Body, than Knowledge is desired by the Mind. *It is not good (saith the Wise Man) that the Soul be without Knowledge*; for Knowledge is its Food and Nourishment, that by which it lives, and grows up into perfection. But the most things which Men study are trifling and impertinent, and may be compared to those kinds of Food which delude the Appetite, rather than feed it; which only preserve the Life from going out, but which do not much either strengthen or comfort it: The Knowledge of God, his Nature, his Attributes, and Providence, is the only solid Food which can nourish the Soul, and raise it to its full growth and perfection. The Conceits of Philosophers, the various Customs of Countries, the Knowledge of Words, Numbers, Lines, Triangles and Circles, and all that either History, or the several Sciences set before us, however useful in themselves, are yet very far inferior to the Knowledge of God; and therefore these ought not to be so much plied as this. He who employs all his Thoughts, and spends all his Time, in the study of these, to the neglect of this, is like foolish Children, who prefer their Toys and Baubles to the great Concerns of Life. A Wise and Just Man bestows his Labour where it is most necessary, and preferreth Things according to their intrinsick worth; and consequently, the Wisdom and Righteousness of Faith do require us to prefer the Knowledge of God to every thing,

thing, and to search after this as for the most precious Treasure. We should seek this in the first place ; this should be the main Business of our Life : and when we suffer other Affairs to encroach upon this, and to shuffle it aside, we are both injurious to our selves, and unjust to Him. Every thing should give place to the Knowledge of God ; the chiefest Business, the best Employment, the most necessary Affairs, ought to be laid aside, rather than this neglected ; because nothing is so necessary or so important as this, it yieldeth the greatest Satisfaction at present, it adorns our Minds with the noblest Qualities, it fills our Understandings with the greatest Wisdom, and it qualifies us for the highest Happiness hereafter : The Knowledge of God, effectuates an Union with him, and maketh us Partakers of the Divine Nature : *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* And, for this cause, some Time should be set apart every Day, and some Days should be wholly allotted for learning and improving our selves in the Knowledge of God, whom, being Infinite, we can never know enough. Upon this account, we should consider his Works ; we should take a frequent View of Nature ; we should be intent upon the wise Contrivance and admirable Adaptation of all things ; we should look into History, and seriously observe the wonderful Passages of his Providence, both towards private Persons, and publick States ; we should meditate upon his Statutes, Laws and Ordinances, which are Transcripts of his Wisdom, Justice, Holiness and Goodness : These are the Means by which we may attain to some measure of the Knowledge of God ; by these we may lay a good Foundation of it in this World ; and who layeth a Foundation of it here, shall have it perfected hereafter.

Fourthly, Faith requires us to devote our selves entirely to God, his Interest and Service ; for being his Workmanship and Creatures, he hath a full Right in us, and an absolute Power over us : *We ought to glorifie God in our souls and bodies, for both are his. I beseech you therefore, brethren,*

brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. There is, in the 16th. of Ezekiel, a most elegant Comparison of *Israel* to an exposed Infant of vile abject Parents; it is pursued with so much true Wit, and solid Rhetorick, that there is hardly a greater Instance to be found in any Author; for the flights are great and high, without any stretch, never beyond Truth; it is applicable to any other People, and to every individual Person: and by this we may understand what indispensable Obligations of Justice and Gratitude are upon us, to attend God, to wait upon his Service, and to seek his Glory. But there is yet a greater Obligation upon us, than that of an exposed Infant towards him who brought it up and cherished it; for God gave us our very Being; we had not been, if his Power had not produced us, as we could not have lived one moment if he had not preserv'd us: He form'd our Bodies, He created our Souls; and therefore it is just and reasonable that the Powers and Faculties of both should be wholly employ'd according to his wise and holy Will. Faith convinceth us that we are not our own, but that we are the Servants of God, and as such, should honour him with all humble Reverence and Respect, and with all unfeigned Submission and Obedience of both the Outward and Inward Man. We should come at his Call, go whither he bids us, and do whatsoever he commands; we should love what he loves, hate what he hates: our Will should entirely comply with his, and our Understandings should receive whatever he dictates. And as this Subjection and Obedience of the Whole Man unto God, is what Justice and Gratitude oblige us to; so it is our own Interest and Profit: We mind our Interest as little as our Duty, when we turn aside from God, and do not observe his Will; for his service is perfect freedom; his yoke

is easie, his burden is light : His Commands are not grievous, and in keeping of them there is great Reward. For, Great peace have they who love his law, and nothing shall offend them.

Finally, To sum up all that hath an immediate reference to God. Faith calls us to set the Lord always before us ; because he is continually present with us. He ought to be in all our Thoughts, and our Eyes should be stedfastly fixed on him, that his Presence may encourage us to Good, and restrain us from Evil : we should regard Him as a most Perfect Pattern worthy of our Imitation ; we should propose Him as the Chief End of all our Designs and Enterprizes : Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever else ye do, do all to the glory of God : and we should lay hold upon Him as the only All-sufficient Stay and Prop of our Life, the chief Support and Comfort of our Souls : In the midst of all my thoughts within me, thy comforts only delight my soul. When Dangers surround us, we should lift up our eyes to him that dwelleth in the heavens, from whom our Help only cometh. When Trouble oppresseth us, we should fortifie our Spirits with the Thoughts of God : Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope in God ; for he is the health of thy countenance, and thy God. VVhen we hear of evil Tiding, we should not be afraid, remembring that God ruleth the VVorld : The Lord reigneth, let the people rejoice ; for, He hath sown peace for the righteous, and gladness for them that are upright in heart. And even in the greatest Prosperity, God should be the chief Matter of our Joy : Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than when wine and oil did most abound. Thus, God should be all things to us ; we should flee to him on all occasions : The Eyes of our Mind, and the Desires of our Heart, should be always toward Him ; He ought to be in all our Thoughts, and we ought to Act and Move with a continual Regard unto Him, that thereby we may express a full Faith in his Infinite Essence, his Almighty Power, his Great VVisdom,
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his All-sufficient Goodness, and his Just and Unerring Providence.

II. *Secondly*, In reference to Our Selves. Faith teacheth us Humility, and sheweth the Unreasonableness of Pride : For what have we now to boast of ? and what have we, that we have not received ? Should Dust be Proud ? Hath one reason to be vain of the Riches of another ? *If any glory, let him glory in the Lord* ; with whom none can compare, who is most Excellent and Perfect, and whose Infinite Glory should extinguish all vain Thoughts.

Faith should give a check to all Murmuring and Repining, and it should stop our Mouths from Quarrelling ; for all that befalleth us, is from the Lord, which is sufficient to impose Silence : *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.* And who is it, indeed, that should dare to question Him that is Absolute ? or to correct the Procedures of Him who is infinitely Wise ?

Faith persuades us to be content with every Condition, and to be satisfied with every Lot which fall to us ; because it is appointed by the Just Proprietor of all Things, and the most Wise Arbitrator of humane Affairs. It teacheth us to receive, not only with Patience, but even with Chearfulness, all the Changes of our State, whether to better or to worse ; because they are Instances of the Wisdom and Sovereignty of Divine Providence, intended for our Profit, and instructing others in the Nature and Use of the present Life : *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted ; but the rich, in that he is made low.* The one ought to rejoice as well as the other, because God is glorified by the Humiliation of the one, as well as the Exaltation of the other, and because these different states give occasion for exercising different Virtues, which make much for our Honour and Comfort in this Life, and which recommend us to the Divine Favour for Rewards in the Life to come : *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive*

the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him.

Faith in God and Providence, requires us to consider our Genius, to search out our particular Capacity, our Natural Gifts and Endowments, and all the Advantages of our Outward State and Circumstances : for as these things enable us to glorifie God, so they are Intimations of his Will and Pleasure, and do declare the particular Service which he has appointed for us.

This Faith convinceth us, that God ordereth and disposeth all things ; that the Success of the wisest Enterprizes depends upon Him ; and that, without his particular Benediction, neither Art nor Nature can avail any thing ; and consequently, that we ought never to trust to our selves, nor lean to our own Understandings : we should not be so vain as to think that we can effectuate any thing by our Strength, Skill, or Industry, without the Divine Concurrence. But whenever we set Heart or Hand to any thing, we should do it in the Name of the Lord, relying wholly on his help ; and if we succeed, we should ascribe the Glory to Him, and not vainly and arrogantly take the Praise to our selves, who are only the Instruments by which the Power and Wisdom of God are pleased to work. Moreover, what is our indispensable Duty, what belongs to our Calling and Station, what is in it self good, commendable, and proper to be intended, we ought to ply with all care and diligence, whatever Encouragement we meet with in the doing it ; for we are answerable only for the Design and Endeavours, which are in our own power but not for the Success, which depends upon God. If our Intention be right, our Will hearty, our Resolution fix'd ; and if we use prudent and proper Means, we shall be acceptable, and shall bear no blame, though the thing succeed not : we ought to do our part, and God himself knows best when it's proper for him to do his. It is our Duty to do that which is good ; and whatever be the event, our labour is not in vain, neither to our selves nor God ; not
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to our selves, because God will accept the *Will for the Deed* ; nor yet to God, because he is glorified the one way as much as the other ; and he doth make both Success and Disappointments to serve the Wise and Just Ends of his Providence.

Faith sheweth us, that God neither is nor can be the Author of Sin ; because it is a Contradiction both to his Will and Nature ; and therefore we ought not to charge our Sins upon God, nor should we impute unto Him the Evil which we do : *Say not thou, it is through the Lord that I fell away ; for thou oughtest not to do the things that he hateth. Say not thou, he hath caused me to err ; for he hath no need of the sinful man. The Lord hateth all abomination ; and they that fear God, love it not.* Though God, by his Wisdom, draweth Good out of Evil, and maketh the Sins of Men to serve his Glory, (as was declared before,) yet we ought only to intend that which is Good ; and should never do Evil, no, not with a design *that Good may come* ; for when we do Evil, and approve it, we oppose our selves to the Will of God, and cast off that Allegiance and Submission which we owe to him. We ought therefore to keep our selves from all Sin, and should stedfastly resist the Temptations to it, and shun the Occasions of it ; for nothing can excuse Sin, or justifie our doing it. Nothing can hurt us but Sin, therefore we should hate it above all things ; and nothing should be so much matter of grief and sorrow to us. The remembrance of our Sins should be always grievous ; because they are against clear Reason, and the Obligations of Justice and Gratitude which we lie under towards God. We ought, above all things, to beware of provoking God to leave us to our selves, or to give us up to the dominion of Sin, which is the greatest Misery that can befall us : but yet when it pleaseth God to suffer us to be carried away by some Temptation, we ought not to accuse him, but should silently *bear this indignation of the Lord*, as well as other Instances of his Displeasure, especially seeing God can wisely order
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our Falls and Miscarriages to his own Glory, and the Edification of others.

The Belief of a Providence, calls us to observe and consider all Accidents and Occurrences; because the least is from God; and if they favour our lawful and just Enterprizes, we ought to receive them thankfully, and to look upon them as Encouragements from Heaven to go on and prosper. Nay, when Reason and Duty do not positively determine us to any particular thing, we not only may, but (I think) ought to take our measures from these things, and should suffer our selves to be sway'd by them; for this is to follow the Guidance and Conduct of Providence, which foreseeth Events, to which the greatest Prudence cannot reach. But then we must be sure, that what is under deliberation, be in it self lawful and innocent, just and proper for us, becoming our Station, and agreeable to our Character; otherwise we abuse Providence, we pervert the Methods of it, and blaspheme God, making him to favour that which is Evil, and an Encourager of Villany, and abominable Practices. Opportunities of doing Evil, or Temptations to it, are not to be look'd upon as Dispensations from Heaven; they are only Trials of our Vertue; by them God asks a Proof of our Integrity, of our Obedience to his Laws, and of our Love to the Truth; and if we yield, and suffer our selves to be prevailed upon, we discover our Weakness, or bewray our Hypocrisy.

Faith in Providence assures us, that God is the Author of all the Good and all the Evil that befall us. Men, and all other Creatures, are but the Means and Instruments which God makes use of, for conveying either the one or the other; wherefore we ought to look further than to the immediate Instruments of either our Happiness or Misery, our Peace or our Trouble; and whether we receive Good, or whether we receive Evil, we should receive both as from the Hands of God, and should be careful to answer the Ends for which he sends

sends either. If Good, we are obliged to all thankful Acknowledgment, and to exert our utmost Strength in the Service of Him who is so kind to us : If Evil, we should *bear the rod, and him that has appointed it* : We should enquire and consider whether it comes to prove our Vertue, or to punish our Sins, or for both ; which we may discern in some measure, by comparing the Matter and Circumstances of the Evil with the Temper of our own Spirits, and the Actions of our past Life : for generally Punishments point out the Sins which occasion them ; and Trials may be known too, by the Circumstances of Times and Persons. Now, whatsoever be the particular End or Occasion of the Rod, it ought not to be despised ; and while we are under it, we should submit and humble our selves by Patience, by Repentance, by adhering closely to all the Points of our Duty, and by firm Resolutions of serving the Lord more faithfully and more fervently ; by which means we shall turn our Afflictions to our Good and Profit, and shall change God's Wrath and Displeasure (if there was any) into Love and Favour : for if we *humble our selves under the mighty hand of God, he will exalt us in due time.*

Faith is the Foundation of Prayer. It maketh Prayer reasonable, necessary, and every Man's Duty, at all times, in all places, and in all circumstances ; for if there be a God, he ought to be worshiped and adored, and it is Just to acknowledge him where-ever he shews himself. If *every good Gift come from him*, we ought, in Gratitude, to give Thanks for what we enjoy. And, if *any man be afflicted*, let him pray, that God, who sendeth the Affliction, may mitigate it, and temper it to his strength, that he may bear him up under it, and turn it to his Advantage. If our Life be preserved by God, if our Labours prosper only by his Blessing, if without him we can do nothing Good or Praise-worthy, if he hath the Ordering and Managing of all things at his Pleasure, there can be nothing more reasonable, or just, or necessary, than for us to commit our selves, and all
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our ways, to his Conduct, to express our dependance upon him, and, *by prayers, supplications and thanksgivings, to make our requests known unto him*, who is both able and willing to do for us above all that we can ask or think. And when we find that we have sinned and offended, it is most just and reasonable that we confess our Sins, and offer *the sacrifices of broken and contrite hearts*, that his wrath may be pacified, and that he may forgive us. And as thus it appears, that all the parts of Prayer are reasonable and just, so there is always occasion for using one or other of them; wherefore the Scripture enjoineth to *pray continually, to pray without ceasing*. And if we believe the Scripture, *the fervent prayers of the righteous avail much*. God calls for Prayer, and *he has not said to any, Seek my face in vain*. Tho' God has proposed certain Ends to himself, yet we must not think that he has put himself, and every particular thing, under such irreverfible Decrees, that he has no power to give a Favour, or prevent Evil, at the desire of them who love him.

12. *Thirdly*, In reference to others, this Faith requires us to consider all Men as common Servants and Subjects of the Great Lord of Heaven and Earth, whom, for his sake, we ought to love, honour and encourage to the utmost of our power. We should abstain from all Injuries; for God, as a wise King, cannot but be displeased to see his Subjects injure and oppress one another, neither will he suffer these things to pass unpunished. We should neither envy the Rich, or those of Higher Degree; nor yet should we despise the Poor, and those of Inferior Condition: For as God hath wisely appointed the different Orders of the World, for the better Government of it, so he assigneth to every Man his Post, and it is his wise Providence which maketh their Condition and Circumstances different. Wealth, and Honour, and all things are God's, which, without any Injustice, he may dispose of as he pleaseth; and whatever he doth, there is no reason to murmur against him:

him : " Friend I do thee no wrong, whether I give to
 " others as much as to thee, or more ; Take what
 " thou hast receiv'd, and go thy way thankfully."
*Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own ? Is
 thine eye evil, because I am good ?* God is an Absolute
 King, and may raise up and cast down at his pleasure,
 and make what changes amongst his Servants he seeth
 fit ; for he knoweth who is best for his Ends and Pur-
 poses. Nothing therefore which God doth, in this
 matter, should offend us : Whoever be employ'd, we
 are sure God will be glorified ; what he hath purposed,
 shall come to pass ; and that all things shall fall right in
 the end, which should abundantly satisfie us. And as
 thus there is no reason to grudge or envy what is done
 unto others ; so neither should the Riches or Honours
 which fall to our own share, make us proud, or fill us
 with contempt of those who seem more neglected :
*I said unto the fools, Deal not so foolishly ; and to the wicked,
 Lift not up the horn. Lift not up your horn on high ;
 speak not with a stiff neck : for promotion cometh neither from
 the East, nor from the West, nor from the South ; but God is
 the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* Ad-
 vancement should persuade to Humility, and is a better
 Cause for Fear than for Pride ; because sometimes God
 setteth up, only that he may cut off the *Horns* with more
 Disgrace, and make one a more publick Example to the
 World : *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, that
 thou mightest cast them down to destruction. If I did despise
 the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when
 they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth
 up ? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him ? Did
 not he that made me in the womb make him ? and did not One
 fashion us in the womb ? The rich and the poor are the work
 of thy hands.* The Persons of the one, are as acceptable
 to God as the other ; the difference is only External, for
 the Conveniences of this Life : Therefore neither should
 the Rich be proud, nor the Poor envious : Nor should
 he who is set over others, insult ; because his State is
 more

more dangerous and difficult, and because his Power and Authority were intended for the Protection and Encouragement of others.

Again, *Faith in God and Providence* requires us to Ponder, and wisely consider the various Changes which happen unto Men, the Alteration of their Circumstances, their Calamities and Disasters; for all these things are inflicted by Providence, not for their own sakes only, but for the sake of others; they are intended for our Instruction, and they are done to render us Wise. These things ought not to be slighted, neither are they to be mocked at: *Who so mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker; and he that is glad at calamities, shall not pass unpunished.* Nay, it ought not to be a matter of Rejoicing when Evil befalls our Enemies; which is a Sin so heinous, that Job thought fit to clear himself of it, immediately after he had purged himself of Idolatry: *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lift up my soul when evil found him; neither have I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul.* We should not make a Sport of the Important Acts of Providence; nor should we think they are done meerly to furnish us with Subject of Discourse. When one Child is whipt, the rest should tremble, lest the Scourge go about: For God punisheth one, to give warning unto others. When we see the Boughs of a goodly Tree lopp'd off; when we behold a strong Oak feli'd to the ground, or pluck'd up by the roots; when the Lustre and Glory of him who shined bright, decayeth; when he that had many Friends, is forsaken; when he whose Wealth was great, is brought to a piece of Bread; when the House of Mirth is turned to the House of Mourning: when these and the like things are transacted before us, we should lay them to heart, and should read them as Lessons of Humility, Moderation, Watchfulness, Contempt of the World, and how much better it is to trust in God, than in Earthly things; and how much wiser it is to care for the Things that are Eternal, than for those that are only

only Temporal. When Publick Transgressors and Presumptuous Sinners are punished, we should applaud the Justice of God : but unless the Crime be plain and manifest, we should beware of judging rashly the great and sudden Calamities that befall others : They on whom the Tower of *Siloam* fell, and whose Blood *Pilate* mingled with their Sacrifices, were not greater Sinners than others : And tho' *Job* was more severely afflicted than any Man, yet we are assur'd, that *he was perfect and upright ; one that feared God, and eschewed evil.* The Reasons why God deals thus and thus with particular Men, are secret, and we ought not boldly and positively to assert them ; but the Uses to be made of them are plain, and we should set our hearts to learn them with all seriousness. Whatever secret Reasons God hath to afflict any, is not material for us to know ; we are a little too curious, when we enquire *whether this man sinned or his parents :* But we should look upon all afflicted Persons as proper Objects of our Compassion, and as Occasions administered by Providence, for the exercise of our Charity, Bounty and Generosity, that thereby we may recommend our selves to God, who taketh pleasure in them. It is the Character of the Wicked, that *they persecute him whom God hath smitten, and talk to the grief of those whom he hath wounded.* A just and good Man will pour Oil and Balm into the Wounds which even God's Hands hath made, and giveth comfortable Words to those whom God punisheth ; he distributeth his Bread to those whom God hath sent a Begging ; he cloatheth those whom God hath stript Naked, and visiteth those whom God hath thrown into Prison and Misery : which is not a Counteracting of Divine Providence, but a following of the Wise and Just Ends of it. In a word, as our Faith in God and Providence encreaseth, so doth our Charity and Good-will towards all. He that believes, has a large Soul ; he makes not himself a Standard by which all things should be measured ; he is not Selfish and Narrow-hearted, but is Liberal and Generous, willing

willing to forgive, and ready to relieve; for he reckons it his Honour and his Happiness to imitate God, and to follow the guidance of his Providence.

13. *Fourthly and Lastly;* In reference to Publick Transactions. The Knowledge and Belief of Providence, teach us, *First*, To regard the Intrinsic Nature of Things, rather than their Outward Fate; and to have a greater Respect to the Justice and Equity of a Cause, than to the Good or Bad Success of it. We are not to take the Measures of our Duty from the Outward Acts of Providence, whose Ends we know not; but from the immutable Rules of Truth and Justice, which are plainly revealed. God indeed is Absolute, and may dispose of Persons and Things as he pleaseth; but we are under indispensable Obligations of doing nothing but what is Just and Right: It is true, his Will is the Supreme Law, to which all should submit, but even by that Law we are forbid to approve any thing which we do not know to be Good. The Nature of Good and Evil are unalterable, and so must our Respects to them be; we must constantly hate the one, and as constantly love the other, whatever be the Consequences, otherwise we are not Just and Righteous before God, whose Methods of Providence are never design'd to loose the Ties of Righteousness. Though God sometimes, to illustrate his Power, Wisdom and Justice, doth Tolerate Evil, yet he never Commands it, neither can he Approve it: Nor will his Toleration excuse or make lawful the joining in an evil Cause, or the embarking with Persons or Parties of wicked Designs and Purposes. Wherefore we ought always to look unto the Merits of the Cause, before we engage in it: we ought carefully to examine the Lawfulness of Methods and Designs proposed, before we espouse them; and should take heed of being misled by the external Aspect of Things, their present seeming Advantages or Disadvantages; nor should we have any respect to the Events, whether they
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be probable or improbable. A Just and Good Man, who believes and fears God, will never make Providence a *Cloak of Maliciousness*, nor a Pretext for Wickedness; he will not enquire into the Secrets of Providence, nor will he conclude God's Love or Hatred from what is before him; he will not determine God's secret Favour to Persons and Things by their outward appearances; but he considers that the Righteous God loveth always that which is right, and that he can never be pleas'd with the evil Actions of Men, with their Oppression and Cruelty, with their Unfaithfulness and Treachery, with their Hypocrisy and False Dealing, and such like: wherefore a Just and Good Man will always take part with Truth, Justice and Equity, though there be never so few on his side, and never so many on the contrary; and will prefer a just and good Cause, that is borne down and persecuted, to a wicked one which is prosperous and promiseth many Advantages. So the *Egyptian* Midwives, *fearing God*, judg'd it their Duty to take part with the oppressed *Israelites*, rather than to court the Favour of *Pharaoh*, by complying with his Tyranny. So *Moses* chose rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to be call'd the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, or to enjoy the Pleasures of that Court. The Generosity and Loyalty of *Ittai* made him prefer the Hardships of a Wilderness, with *David*, to the Ease and soft Pleasures of the Court and City, which a Compliance with *Abshalom* might have procur'd him. So, not only the Priests and the Levites, but all those in the Ten Tribes, whose hearts were set to seek the Lord, did resort unto *Jerusalem*, to worship the Lord there, and to strengthen the Hands of *Rehoboam*, notwithstanding the severe Prohibition of *Jeroboam*, and the Hazards which they ran by doing what was so displeasing unto him. So *Plutarch* tells us of a Woman who gave honourable Interment to a Brother and some Relations Condemn'd by the Tyrant of the Place; and being ask'd why she did a thing so displeasing to him, and so dangerous for her self; she

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answer'd

answer'd Heroically, *Because it pleas'd the Gods.* For the Duties which Justice and Nature oblige us to, ought never to be superseded; nor should our Respects to God, Truth, Conscience, and the Laws of Righteousness, be laid aside, whatever Difficulties they run us into: As neither Error should be profess'd, nor Evil done, whatever present Advantages attend them; I say, *present Advantages*; for it is certain, at the long run, Truth prevails, and nothing will be profitable to one but Integrity and Uprightness.

Again, *Faith in God and Providence* gives us right Notions of Government, and of the Means which are necessary to support it: it shews, that Government is a Divine Institution, and not a Humane Device to favour Pride and Ambition; that the Distinction of Men into several Ranks and Degrees, is necessary for the Peace and Order of the State, and that both good and bad Kings are sent from God. Wherefore by this Faith we are obliged, *as to fear God, so to honour the King, and not to meddle with them that are given to change, whose calamity cometh suddenly, and who knoweth the ruine of them both.* He that hath this Faith, is a Friend to Government; he is observant of Order; he is not for Confounding and Levelling; he *submitterh to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the King as supreme, or unto Governors as unto those who are sent by him.* He is subject not only for wrath but for conscience sake; and for this cause also he payeth tribute to whom tribute is due, and custom to whom custom, and fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour: Because by these things Divine Providence preserveth the Peace of the World, and keepeth Humane Affairs from running into Confusion. *Into whatsoever City he entreteth, he studieth to live peaceably with all, and he prayeth for the peace of that City; because from the peace of that City, he expecteth from God the Blessing of Peace.*

Again, *Faith in God and Providence* sheweth, that our Hopes and Fears, concerning Publick Affairs, and the
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State of a Nation or Church, are not to be taken from Outward Appearances, nor to be grounded upon the Affections, the Power, the Wit, or the Policy of Men, but upon the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, whom nothing can resist, and to whom all things are possible ; who, as he created the World out of Nothing, so he is still able to conquer the greatest Difficulty. The Lord's Hand is not short, it can reach both the Highest and the Lowest Things : He is able both to throw down the strongest and most secure, and also to raise up them that are in the most desperate case. *The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high ; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground ? Though thou exaltest thy self as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord : who will take vengeance of his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his enemies : He is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet : He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and dryeth up all the rivers. Who can stand before his indignation ? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger ? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.* Again, When he is resolved to comfort a distressed People ; when he is satisfied with their Punishment, and says it is enough ; when their warfare is accomplished, their iniquity pardoned, and that the Lord thinks they have received at his hand double for all their sins ; then, though they be shut up in a Wilderness, though they be in the greatest straits, and saddest circumstances, the voice shall cry, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord ; make straight in the desert a high-way for our God ; and then Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain ; that is, when the Lord hath a mind to do good, nothing can hinder it, every Opposition and Difficulty shall be removed : And the glory of the*

Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; viz. they shall be all convinced that it is the Lord's doing, and that the Deliverance has been wrought by his Wisdom and Power. And for this cause, none should be anxious about the Means; nor should they confine their Deliverance to the Methods and Instruments under their view, as if God had no other ways of compassing his Ends, but what they can see and discern.

Further, *Faith in God and Providence* forbids all censuring the common State of Humane Affairs in this Life, the Revolutions of Kingdoms, the Depression of Good Men, and the Prosperity of the Wicked, the Conniving at them *who deal treacherously, and the suffering the wicked to devour him that is more righteous than he.* For whatever Offence Ignorant and Unthinking Men take at these things, *Faith* (as has been shewn) proves them to be wise and deliberate Acts of Providence, well fitted to the present Condition and Circumstances of Mankind; and which bring both more Glory to God, and Good unto Men, than if the Course of Things were otherwise.

Moreover, This Faith gives us true Instructions concerning Publick and National Calamities; it shews us, that they are from God, and that by them he declares himself the Sovereign Judge of the World; that Crying Sins, and Presumptuous Wickedness, is the Cause of them; and that nothing can either prevent or delay their coming, when deserved, or remove and abate the rigour of them, when they are inflicted, except true and unfeigned Repentance. Therefore, he that believes, humbles himself before these Evil Days come; he judgeth and condemneth himself before-hand, that he may not be judg'd and condemn'd by God; he is prudent to foresee the Evil Days afar off; and his Security is, his Humility, his Contrition, his Relyance upon the Mercy of God. The Provision which he makes against these Evil Days, are *Sighs and Tears* for his own Sins, and the *Abominations of others*; for thereby he hopes a Mark *shall be*

be set on his Forehead, that the Destroying Angel may not come near him. The least noise of God's Judgments, in the remotest part of the World, doth alarm him that believeth in God and Providence; because he knoweth that God is a Just and Impartial Judge, no Respecter either of Persons or Nations, but when he ariseth to judgment, he will punish all the inhabitants of the earth. I saw (saith the Prophet) the tents of Cushman in affliction, and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble: And when I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble. And when these Judgments of God are drawing near, when they are impending over the place where he liveth, when these Publick Storms blow hard upon the Land where he dwells, he doth not make Lyes his Refuge, nor doth he seek Shelter by unlawful Arts and Means; which, whatever they may seem to others, he sees very improper, because it is adding Iniquity to Sin, and so rendreth one more obnoxious. But God is his Refuge, he fleeth even to him for Safety; and though he useth Prudence, yet his chiefest Confidence is in God's Mercy and Goodness: Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, and hide thy self as it were for a little moment; until this indignation be over-past.

This leads my Thoughts to the Publick Transactions of Providence at present, and for some Years past, which I heartily wish were more wisely consider'd, and more seriously laid to heart. I crave leave, before I conclude, to make some short Reflections, which I shall do very impartially, without respect to either Persons or Parties, as being only concerned in the general Designs of Providence, and the loud Alarms which it gives us.

It is evident, by the very Publick News, that the Three Great Scourges of the World, the Sword, Famine, and Pestilence, have been very much employ'd for several Years; some Nations have been chastised

with all of them ; and there is scarce any which hath not been visited with one or other. The Fire of War has been kindled, and it hath burnt now constantly with us and in our Neighbourhood for the space of Eight Years ; it has spread through almost the whole World, and engaged all Nations in every part of it, except some three or four, who yet sit not very easily ; it has proceeded furiously, and has left dreadful Effects behind it : The Nations interess'd are brought very low by the Consumption of their Men and Money, the Failure of their Trade, and the Desolation of their Countries. The Strong are weakened, and the Rich are exhausted ; it is hard to tell which is worst. It is certain, that all have smarted severely, and that none are Gainers yet, nor like to obtain what they projected, nor any other considerable Advantage. And besides, the Evils of War, Famine and Sickness, the World has been visited of late with dreadful Earthquakes, with unusual Thunder and Lightning, with terrible Storms both at Sea and Land, which has not only destroy'd private Persons, but also has been the ruine of several Countries : So that we may say, Heaven and Earth, the Sea and the Air, and the whole Course of Nature, have enter'd into a League and Confederacy against Mankind ; as the Bonds of Peace betwixt Nations have been broken, and the Union of some People of the same Nation dissolv'd, which hath exceedingly troubled the State of Humane Affairs, and which hath rendred almost every Place unsafe and uneasy : some Protestant Churches have been entirely raz'd, and the Glory of others have suffer'd a great eclipse ; the Foundation of some has been quite destroy'd, and that of others very much shaken by Factions and Divisions.

And is all this to be talk'd of only over a Dish of Coffee ? Do these things serve only to pass away the Time ? Is there a God ? Doth he rule the World ? *Is there any evil in a city, which he doth not ?* And shall we not then consider all these things as his Doings ? The Ambition
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of Princes, their Covetousness, their Humours and Passions, are they not managed by God? Are they not the Instruments by which he works his Pleasure amongst Men? *Doth not he make War? and doth not he also make Peace?* Can it be expected, before he be pacified? We may enquire after the Disposition of Princes and States; we may seek to know their Motions, and the Preparations they make: but we should come sooner to our purpose, would we turn our Meditations towards God: If we would consider him as the Author of all these Broils and Commotions which disturb the present Peace of the World; and if we would enquire how we should appease his Wrath and Displeasure: For it is evident, that he is angry; and untill his Anger be turn'd away, Nations shall not be at Peace, nor shall the Land enjoy its Rest. The War has been prolong'd several Years beyond Men's Expectation; and however wearied the several Parties may be, yet God can easily hinder a Peace, and defeat a Treaty, until he be aveng'd of those who have provoked him. I pretend to no particular Revelation; I lay claim to no New Light; I will not arrogate any Discovery of Secrets, or Mysteries Prophecies: but I think, by Reason and Scripture, by Sacred and other History, by the Observation of the Ordinary Methods and Measures of Divine Providence, it is evident, that God *has come out of his place to visit the Inhabitants of the Earth; that he hath whetted his glittering Sword; that his Hand has taken hold on Judgment; that he will render vengeance to his enemies, and reward them that hate him.* People may flatter themselves as they please, but they do in vain look for Safety from the Hills and from the Mountains, or from any other Hand but God; and not from him neither, until they have reconciled themselves by Repentance, and Obedience to the Truth. *Ephraim may send to the Assyrian, and Judah to King Zareb, but neither of them shall be able to heal or cure them of their Wounds. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face.*

Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips. But alas! People have slidn back by a perpetual back-sliding; they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turneth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these. A good Cause will not save wicked Persons from deserved Wrath, in the day that God visiteth for Iniquity; neither is there reason why any should be Proud and Insolent, because they have been spar'd, whilst others were punish'd; nor should they fancy themselves Better, or more Righteous, because they have been entrusted with the Punishment of others. Who among you will give ear to this? Who will hearken and hear for the time to come? Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law, Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battel, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart. But now, saith the Lord, O Jacob, fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. Let them that have sinned bear the indignation of the Lord, because they have sinned against him, until he plead their cause, and execute judgment for them: He will bring them forth to the light, and they shall behold his righteousness. And, Let them who stand, take heed lest they fall; for they are not more righteous than others: The Adversity of their Brethren should make them fraid, lest they hasten their own Destruction. God is Just and Righteous, who commandeth the Punishment of Transgressors: but when he putteth the Rod into the Hands of sinful Men, they ought to use it with Pity and Discretion; for if they suffer Passion to transport them to Severity, then they are not Instruments of
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God's Justice, but Executioners of their own Wrath ; and then God takes the Rod out of their Hands, and gives it to others, to avenge their Partiality, and unequal Dealing : *I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease ; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.*

To end this Matter. God only can restore the Blessings of Peace and Plenty ; He only can settle the Nations, put an end to our Differences, and make Church and State to flourish : And as it is this which we all profess to desire, so that we may obtain these great Blessings, let all and every one search and try their ways, and *put away the evil of their doings* ; let them cease from Evil, and do Good ; let them study the Truth, and obey it, and learn to be more Upright both with God and Man.

The CONCLUSION.

I Have now finish'd the *Second Part* of my Undertaking, which would have been publish'd sooner, if some Accidents (which need not to be mention'd) had not hinder'd it. But what was the cause of so long a Delay has been also the occasion of Enlarging it much beyond my first Intention ; though I cannot say, against my Will, or the Design I had of pleasing or profiting the Reader : for what has been added, is proper and useful either to confirm or clear this important *Faith in Providence*. It is with Difficulty that I am now disengag'd from the Subject ; for it is as a Place that hath all the Riches of Art and Nature, which detaineth one with Pleasure, which makes him forgetful of the Time, and unwilling to be carried off.

Providence is a Subject copious and delightful, one may write Volumes upon it, without wearying himself, or proving

proving tedious to others; for it affords great variety of choice Matter. To write an exact History of *Providence*, is above the Capacity of any one Man; it is Work enough for all the Wise Heads and Able Pens in the World: For if we would trace and follow *Providence*, we must travel through the whole Course of Nature, and consider every Part of the Creation; we must look back to the Beginning of all Things, and mark all the periods of Time; we must read over the General History of the World, and the Particular History of every Countrey; we must observe our own Lives, the Lives of other Men, and all Publick and Private Occurrences.

A full and comprehensive Knowledge of Providence is not to be expected, nay, it is impossible in this World; but it is every one's Duty and Interest to endeavour to abound in this Knowledge: for it fills our Heads with wise Thoughts, and keeps our Hearts in a good Temper; it shews the true Principles and Rules of Action, and lays the only sure Foundation of inward Peace. The Knowledge and Belief of Providence giveth true Wisdom, it animateth to what is Good, and restraineth from Evil: it dispelleth Doubts, and freeth the Mind from anxious Thoughts; it abates our Trouble in Adversity, and adds to our Joy in Prosperity, by making it solid and reasonable; it removes vain Hopes, and causeless Fears, and gives one Courage and Confidence to enterprize every thing that is Just, and Good, and Praise-worthy, whatever Dangers and Difficulties may appear. The time would fail me, to tell of them who, through this Faith, *subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtained Promises, stopt the mouths of Lions, quenched the violence of Fire, escaped the edge of the Sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the Armies of the Aliens, and who endured the trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, of bonds and imprisonments.*

They who disbelieve a Providence, and are ignorant of it, are as those in great darknes, who cannot see their way, but continually fall and stumble; whereas those

those who believe a Providence, and regard it, walk in the Light which both directs them, and gives them Security. The Condition of the one and the other may be fitly compared to those at Sea in two different Ships, the one a strong, well-built Ship, tight, and well provided, and under the conduct of a Skilful, Experienc'd Pilot; but the other old and rotten, ill provided, and without any body of Skill to manage her: The Waves beat, and the Storm blows alike upon both, but the one holds out much better than the other: and the Minds of those within them are very different; those in the one are desperate and stunn'd with fear of being swallowed up every moment; whereas the other are quiet and secure, because they have hope, and something to trust to. *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof: He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.* The Peace and Tranquillity of the Mind cannot be secured without *Faith in God and Providence.*

Some will perhaps say that I have too much encourag'd *Deism*, by magnifying so much this *Faith in God and Providence*; for if it be such as I have described, and if it effectuate all I have said, there seems no more necessary. To obviate this, I say, that indeed this Faith comprehends all; but then he hath not this Faith, nor doth he follow and obey it, who disbelieves what is really from God, and who rejects a *Revelation* which is certain, and *Truths* which are clearly revealed. What other Faith is necessary, it is as being the Consequence of *this Faith*, and such ought to be received; for he who doth not admit plain, necessary Consequences, either doth not well understand what he believeth, or he doth not sincerely believe what he professeth. If we believe a God, we ought to acknowledge his Authority and Veracity; neither

neither of which is done, if what He says be denied, and if his wonderful Manifestations be disowned. What these are, shall be the Subject of the following and last Part, where shall be consider'd,

1. *The Nature of Faith, as opposed to Sense.*
2. *As distinguished from Reason.*
3. *As it respects Revelation.*
4. *And the things revealed particularly in reference to Jesus Christ.*

In the mean time, I pray God that our present Labours may be acceptable to Him, and useful to others, that they may contribute to remove what hinders some from admitting a Faith so Important, and so Necessary, and that they may confirm and encrease it in others.

F I N I S.

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THE END.

